

**Minutes  
Special Meeting  
Cumberland CUSD #77  
Cumberland High School  
August 11, 2021**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by President Wes Chambers. Members present included Pam Ross, Ben Bland, Steve Layton, Howard Markwell, Beth Reeder and Josh McElravy. Others present included Elementary Principal, Daniel Huffman, Middle School Principal, Stacy Keyser, High School Principal Kevin Maynard, and Todd Butler, Superintendent. Visitors present were: Nancy and Jeff McElravy, Mildren Carlen, Theron and Peggy Kuhn, Jamie Dalton, Beth Cornwell, Becky Powers, Jamie Whitaker, Rhonda Walsh, Dawn Grubb, Beth and John Wormhoudt, Audrey Schmidt, Tony and Lyn Carlen, Nathaniel and Michele Figgins, Logan and Macie Boyd, Ray and Janet Blade, Kathy Peters, Tammy Oakley, Kyle McCullough, Matt and Tera Scales, Brad Becker, Carole and Zoe Mitchell, Cameron and Madison James, Jill Thornton, Sophia Thornton, Charlee Thornton, Reid Carlen, Derrick Thornton, Nate and Becky Warfel, Sydney Robinson, Kimberly Keck, Kelly and Shawna Sutherland, Kyle Bergbower, Rose Weber, Brian and Kelly Stierwalt, Jack and Kari Bierman, Curtis and Kelli Walker, Ethan and Jessi Marti, Clay and Jennie Stults, Lyndsey Finn, Ashley and Noah Carter, Rachel Tipsword, Lisa Jones, Jim Smith, Elly Osborne, Kylee Booth, Gary and Mindy Shaw, Nathan, Kristi and Kate Shirley, Jenny Finley, Janel Haga, Tyler and Mackenzie Flood, Maddox McElravy, Randy Hurt, Travis and Kendra Brading, Stephanie Nichols, Dustin Thornton, Aaron Beard, Rayna McElravy, Jon and Kenzi Easton, DeDe, Katie and Madelyn McElravy, Darrell and SueAnn Kimble, Ashton Coleman, Kenny and Deidre Weaver, Chaney Thornton, Bob Blade, Samantha Strohl, Gail Bierman, Wanda Sowers, Sabrina Feltner, Lona Zike, Tim and Debbie Beals, Sherry, Jalayna and Jadlyn Kearns, Tammy Robinson, Rita Gray, Grant and Kelly Cox, Ryan and Lisa Dittamore, Brittany Figgins, Terri Nickles, Bryce Fitch, Wendy Peters, Andy Thoele, Jamie and Kaycie Blade, Helen Walker, Denny Ryan, Mike Dittamore, Bill Dittamore, Dawn Peters, Janene and Paige Dittamore, Jennifer Claybaugh, Wanda Sowers, Shane and Kayla Peters, Casey Overbeck, Jake and Micki Bradley, Luke Chancellor, Joanie and Justin Rauch, George Spears, Misty Ervin, Emily McGinnis, Janet Yocum, Brandy Wolke, Chris Yocum, Kayla Aaron, Rose Weber, Racheal Tipsword, Makenzie and Tyler Flood, Kristin Miles, Heather Wolke, Cris Ingram, Karen and Chris Buescher, Roy Clapp, Kaitlyn Haas, Heather Kemper, JoAnn Ames, Christina Pugh, Laura Brown, Peggy Kuhn, Adam and Emily Phipps, Todd Hall, Matthew and Racheal Sudkamp, Toby, Adam, and Paige Wolke, Tom Wolke, Carolyn Wolke, Ken Wolke, Jen and Brian Vahling, Trista Cisney, Matthew and Courtney Majors, Todd Whitaker, Tonya Hinz, Beth and Chad Glanzer, Angela Crouse, Jerod Burton, Jodi Carlen

The Board and guests started the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The President welcomed members of the audience and asked if there was any public comment concerning the revised reopening school plan draft for the 2021-2022 school year. He asked that anyone that has questions come to the microphone and state their name.

Kelly Sutherland approached the microphone. He stated that he is a graduate of Cumberland High School. He had a great experience in education in the district and took many of Mike

Schmidt's classes. He benefited from classes that led to his life's work in engineering. He doesn't have a medical background, but is a good engineer. He has extensive experience analyzing data and information. He is good at technical research and processing data. He said he doesn't look at mask from a medical standpoint, he doesn't claim to know anything about medicine, but he is a good engineer. He researched several of these masks and the one he displayed to the audience, which is a typical surgical grade mask, is manufactured in China. There is no technical data as to the effectiveness of the filtration level of this particular mask. He asked if anyone has seen any specifications of what they expect masks to hold up to and filter. He was able to do some research from independent labs and the institute of health. These masks filter up to .35 microbes. A virus is .025 to .1 micro (like a millionth of an inch). This doesn't do anything. Most of the information I have found is directly from the manufacturer. He has researched the N95 masks made by 3M, which is supposed to be the epitome of a mask, supposed to protect everyone from this virus. 3M itself states it will filter only 0.4 microbes. Again, the virus is much smaller than that. Many people say the virus is in your saliva and the mask is catching the virus as people are wearing it. But this virus is so small, it is carried in the moisture in your breath, it is aerosol, it is airborne. The masks that he has seen everyone wearing will not do anything to filter a particle that small. For the sake of suggesting a mask that you could wear to protect yourself, could be done in 2 ways. Full face masks with self-contained breathing apparatus, like a firefighter wears, would be one option. There is a mask with a filter hose that goes through a filter pack, and has a fan to supply new air, but that costs about \$800 a piece, that could serve as another option. He doesn't claim to be a medical professional, but he knows that we cannot be successful with this type of mask against this virus. He is disturbed with the state board of education and all other health agencies and the lack of guidance on what masks we should use that would be effective. They are supplying particular guidelines on what mask we need to be wearing. A virus is pretty darn small and will this really work for us? He appreciates the chance to speak about this information and he will happily discuss his research with anyone after the meeting.

Tonya Hinz approached the mic. She had a son who graduated from Cumberland High School and has participated with her son in a wonderful wrestling program. She hoped that her younger son would have been able to participate in wrestling last year, but Covid took that away and she hopes he can start as a first grader this year. She thanked the school board for having the public meeting to involve the community and give them freedom of choice in this decision. She noted that N95 masks don't protect anyone regardless of what everyone says. The CDC claims they are beneficial on children; however, no one has ever studied them on her children. This has been confirmed with the head of the CDC. I personally would be terrified to know what was on my child's mask at the end of a school day last year. It usually came home wet and stained every day. I, like everyone else, was ecstatic to hear that masks would be optional for this school year. Yet, here we are again and our tyrannical governor has issued another mandate. Rumors are flooding social media and all the gossip is that he can pull funding if the school doesn't comply. There are problems with these rumors, our state legislature makes the laws, not the governor. Our state's governor only has the power granted to them by the state's legislature. Never has Governor Pritzker been given the power to mandate masks. She quoted the Executive Order 2021-85. She is asking the board to stand for the freedom of choice for our

children. We are responsible for teaching our children to make the right choice, not the easy one. Please be brave and set the example our children deserve.

Jennie Stults approached the mic. She has a child who is a junior in high school and one who recently graduated from CHS. She stated that she is the organizer for the Cumberland Masks Optional group. This has been a very difficult time for all of us, the parents, the school board, everyone. While we know that this virus is never going away, we cannot continue to put our children on the backburner. School boards have been elected by the community and should be the voice of the community. We need to be able to be with each other. They need to have the joy and freedom of being a kid. She stated that initially listed several different research statistics, but chose to focus on the children this time. The social aspect of our children is very important. The absence of social relationships affects children in many ways. Isolated children tend to have lower subsequent education attainment, part of a less advantaged social class in adulthood and they tend to be psychologically distressed in adulthood as well. When masking a child, we are socially isolating them, especially a child that is somewhat anxious or introverted. It's important we support these children to become better, more productive adults. Allow them to grow socially and interact with their peers. We need to raise critical thinkers that can navigate the outside world. I encourage you to do what is best for the children, they deserve it. We need to come together and stand and fight against demands being set by our state. We will continue to stand by and support the school board with future mandates. We must stand together and stand firm.

Rachel Sudkamp approached the mic. She has spoken with many of the board members individually. She understands that the board does not want masks on the children. She is appreciative of the choice to mask being left for the parents. She acknowledges the difficult position the board members are in. She said to look at all of these community individuals who are here to support the board tonight and the proposed plan. They are here to back the board. She stated to the community members present that we have to be here the entire school year, and we have to help the board if something goes bad, we need to be here as a resource, and possibly affect individuals financially if things get that extreme. She appreciates everything the board is doing. Thank you, again, for listening to us and for designing your plan for our best interests.

Jalayna Kearns approached the microphone. She is a 5th grader at Cumberland Middle School. She stated that even though you are wearing masks, you could very well be getting the virus in you. I feel that all of the other students here don't want to wear masks and I agree.

Macie Boyd approached the microphone. She thanked everyone for all of the time and effort that everyone has put in for our students' best interest. We all want what is best for the kids. After reviewing the plan, she appreciates the consideration of placing the power to choose back in the parents' hands. She knows that parents have their child's best interest in mind whether it be to wear a mask or not wear a mask. There are some parents who will want to mask their child for personal reasons, or fear of the virus. They have done their research and they are doing what is best by their child. There will be some parents who will choose to not mask their child for their personal reasons. They have done their research and they are doing what is best by their child. She trusts that the board will use their right to choose on the vote for this

reopening plan and feels the community will continue to work together for the children of our community.

Bryce Fitch approached the mic. He graduated in 2005 from Cumberland High School. He thanked the board for their time on the board. He understands the pressure, accusations, and threats that anyone who serves on a board receives. He has served on boards himself, and has been threatened. He wanted to discuss liability, leadership, and valued proposition of the community. First of all, with liability, the minute you walk out of your house, you accept liability, you cannot escape liability. Bobby Sowers passed away during his time in high school. There was a car accident that took his life. This was a very sad situation that occurred and it was hard for the community to process. The school did not add any additional regulations to mitigate that risk, there was just nothing they could do. We cannot live in fear and the unknown, that is just life. We should not be afraid of our governor. The state of IL does not care about us, simply put. He will stand with anyone for liability. Whatever he can do. He spends his time advising people on their retirement and leaving a legacy. He stated that money is not his god and it never will be. He is tired of the government mandates. Next, he mentioned leadership. He requested that if you do decide to mask our children, please follow your example. Please practice what you preach. He spent years in the National Guard and one of the first things he learned about leadership was, don't ask someone to do something you aren't willing to do yourself. Lastly he mentioned, value proposition. He has spent a lot of time trying to help many people expand businesses in this community. The State of Illinois is not helpful when it comes to expanding the livelihoods of many in our communities. There are tons of taxes imposed on businesses. Our valued proposition in our community is our children and how our school takes care of our children. Many would ask why anyone would want to live in Cumberland County and I know why. I can look at the members of the board and Todd and I know all of them personally. I can tell you something about each and every one of them and I can let anyone know that my child is going to be taken care of. If we go along with these laws, we give up the best part of our community. He thanked everyone for what they do.

Steve Layton made the motion to approve the revised reopening plan for the 2021-2022 school year. Howard Markwell seconded the motion. All members voted "yes". The reopening plan was approved.

Steve Layton made the motion to adjourn. It was seconded by Ben Bland. All present voted "Aye".

President Wes Chambers thanked everyone for attending tonight and sharing their views, he appreciates their support.

The meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted this day, August 11, 2021.

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Wes Chambers, President

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Ben Bland, Secretary