

Litchfield Community Unit District No. 12
Special Meeting
Board of Education
Radius Room of Litchfield High School
1705 N State St. Litchfield, IL. 62056
Thursday, August 5, 2021
6:00p.m.

The Litchfield Board of Education held a special meeting beginning at 6:00p.m. in the Radius Room of Litchfield High School ,1705 N State Street, Litchfield, IL. 62056. Board members in attendance included: Julie Abel, President; Valerie Cain, Secretary, David Belusko, Mike Fleming and Gregg Hires. Ron Anglin was unable to attend. Also in attendance: Dr. Gregg Fuerstenau, Superintendent; Kris Adamson, Recording Secretary. Administrators: Jennifer Thompson; Juleta Ellis, Hilary Wagenblast; Russ Tepen; Jeremy Heigert and Adam Favre. Amy Newkirk, LEA representative. John Hanafin of News Herald. Concerned parents and citizens.

Julie Abel, president of the Board of Education, called the meeting to order at 6:00p.m. She announced that the order of the agenda would change slightly. Public Input and Citizens agenda were moved to after the Old Business Item. Members felt that those in attendance would have questions answered before or instead of giving their input.

Old Business

A motion was made by Mark Bloome and seconded by Valerie Cain to approve the 2021-2022 Litchfield Community Unit School District #12 reopening plan. The plan was updated to meet CDC, IDPH, and ISBE mandated guidelines that were given to school districts after the July board meeting. All students (PreK- 12) and staff shall adhere to universal masking that has been mandated by the governor. Each building will have ways for students to have mask breaks. Elementary students will continue to eat lunch and breakfast in their classrooms. Lockers will be more accessible this year. High School students will dress for PE. All staff and passengers are buses will be required to wear a mask. Next to present to the Board were the three nurses for the District. The new guidelines allowed the social distance to reduce from 6 feet to 3 feet. The nurses will continue with testing on site. "Test to Stay" will allow students to stay or return to the classroom more efficiently. Everyone is working hard to keep the kid in school. Kendra Kirby announced that even though it is summer time COVID did not go away. We still have students and staff who will start the year quarantined. Dr. Dan Wujek was asked to address the Board. He stated that his preference would be for no masks, but to keep staff and kids in school they need to be worn. The new variant is more contagious and will spread quickly. Dr. Wujek stated that it was not necessary for masks to be worn outside. Dr. Wujek was able to answer many of the board's questions and concerns. Student and Staff safety are the Boards number one concern. Dr. Fuerstenau informed the board that not being in compliance with the universal mask mandate could effect a district's accreditation. The District's insurance carrier sent a correspondence that if the district was not in compliance they would not be covered by liability insurance. Having last year under our belt, the staff, students and parents are better prepared for what this mandate will ask of them. Prior to putting the motion to vote the Board allowed for public input. Tobi Martin was the first to address the board. Mrs. Martin asked the Board to vote against wearing masks. Mr. Jim Odle also asked that the Board to look at the universal mask mandate closely and how it effects our children. Other concerns brought to the table included loss of funding for not being in compliance. Protocol for discipline of students and staff not following the rules. Remote learning will not be an option for students this year; accept under certain circumstances. The Board thanked everyone that had reached out to them to voice their concerns and suggestions. Roll Call Vote: YEA: Abel, Bloome, Cain, Fleming. NAY: Belusko, Hires. Motion carried 4-2.

Personnel

A motion was made by Valerie Cain and seconded by Mark Bloome to approve the family medical leave request from Brittany Ronco beginning November 20, 2021 and returning January 2022. Roll Call Vote: YEA: Abel, Belusko, Bloome, Cain, Fleming, Hires. Motion carried. 6-0.

A motion was made by Gregg Hires and seconded by David Belusko for the Board to enter into closed session at 7:40pm. to discuss: The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the District or legal counsel for the District, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee or against legal counsel for the District to determine its validity. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) Roll Call Vote: YEA: Hires and Belusko. NAY: Abel, Bloome, Cain, Fleming. Motion failed: 4-2

A motion was made by Mark Bloome and seconded by Mike Fleming to accept the resignation of Katie Steinbach, clerical aide, beginning August 6, 2021. Roll Call Vote: YEA: Abel, Bloome, Cain, Fleming. NAY: Belusko; Present: Hires. Motion carried 4-1.

A motion was made by Mark Bloome and seconded by Mike Fleming to approve the hire of Kimberly Weller as an Instructional Tutor at Russell School beginning the 2021-2022 school year. Roll Call Vote: YEA: Abel, Belusko, Bloome, Cain, Fleming. Present: Hires. Motion carried 5-0.

A motion was made by Mark Bloome and seconded by Mike Fleming to approve the voluntary transfer of Josh Hughes from Middle School Social Studies teacher to High School Social Sciences teacher beginning the 2021-2022 school year. Roll Call Vote: YEA: Abel, Belusko, Bloome, Cain, Fleming. Present: Hires. Motion carried 5-0.

A motion was made by Mark Bloome and seconded by Valerie Cain to hire Nick Gerndt as Middle School Studies teacher and Head Coach for High School Boys Basketball beginning the 2021-2022 school year. Roll Call Vote: YEA: Abel, Belusko, Bloome, Cain, Fleming. Present: Hires. Motion carried 5-0.

A motion was made by Mike Fleming and seconded by Mark Bloome to accept the resignation of Maggie Gunn, Special Education teacher, effective immediately. Roll Call Vote: YEA: Abel, Belusko, Bloome, Cain, Fleming. Present: Hires. Motion carried 5-0.

Seeing no further action to be taken, a motion was made Valerie Cain and seconded by Mark Bloome to adjourn the meeting at 7:46p.m. Voice Vote: AYE: Abel, Belusko, Bloome, Cain, Fleming and Hires Motion carried 6-0.