

RSU # 12
BOARD OF DIRECTORS (REGULAR) MEETING
Tuesday, August 17, 2021 @ 6:30 PM
Chelsea Elementary School

*The meeting will be recorded and made available on our website at
<http://www.svrsu.org/remote-school-board-meetings>.*

Draft Minutes

1. Call to Order, Roll Call, and Flag Salute

Meeting called to order at 6:46 p.m.

Sandra Devaney led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Sandra asked the new board members to introduce themselves to the board. Our newest board members are Deborah Myers (Somerville), James Willigar (Chelsea), Dustin Mellor (Windsor) and Rick Danforth (Chelsea).

Present: Deborah Myers, Will Sugg, James Willigar, Kimberly Hutchinson, Sandra Devaney, Rick Cote, Dustin Mellor, Deborah Talacko, Russell Gates, Rick Danforth, Lynette Conroy, Kristina Verney

Administrators attending: Deb Taylor, Michele Grant, Delia Dearnley, Pat Block, Larry Dancer, Allison Myers, Mark Deblois, Heather Wilson, Stephanie Oliphant

2. Focus on Learning: None

3. Public Comment: (10 min): *Public Comment at School Board meetings is to be restricted to items on the agenda. Comments regarding individuals or personnel matters are not appropriate for the public session. If you wish to submit written public comment, then you may do so by emailing Leslie Burgess at leburgess@svrsu.org.*

Sandra Devaney explained the process of public comment to the audience.

Jessica Trask was addressing Item C, New Business, Safety Protocols. She thanked the school board for their hard work last year and all of the efforts made to keep students in school five days a week, as one of the few districts in the state that did so. She has been a resident of Chelsea for 11 years and has a child who is entering kindergarten and does not want masks to be worn in school. She said her child wore a mask in preschool last year and found that there was a psychological and emotional affect from wearing the mask, that he could not recognize his peers or teachers in public, he developed bad habits and it was hindering his learning and development. She cited an article from a website (cigrat.umn.edu) regarding the ineffectiveness of masks, aside from N95 masks, as She acknowledges that she is a mother, not a doctor, but has always felt that she has always known what was best for her child when dealing with doctors. She feels that the masks are wrong as children need to see faces, expressions

as they learn. Children need to see the faces of their peers and their teachers. She doesn't want her child or her child's teacher to wear a mask. She feels that the numbers are low in the state of Maine, if they are stated correctly, and that there are enough people who are vaccinated that the students should not have to wear masks. She will not vaccinate her children. She disagrees that children should be required to have a vaccine to attend school. While she is grateful for what the district would be able to do last year to keep students in school and off from Zoom, she feels long term use of masks could have a psychological and developmental effect on children.

Angela Sullivan was addressing Item C, New Business, Safety Protocols. Ms. Sullivan has two children entering Whitefield School. She also agrees that children should not wear masks in school. Over the summer, no one has been wearing masks. Students and teachers do not want to wear masks, masks come home dirty and wet. She feels parents should have a say in whether or not children wear masks, that teachers do not want to wear masks and they should also have the option.

Steve Trussell was addressing Item C, New Business, Safety Protocols. Mr. Trussell has two children in school. He agreed that children should not wear masks. He did not say much last year because there was not much data but now there is more data. Covid is not harming children. It is a virus and it is not killing them. He does not want students to wear masks. He feels children need to see teacher's faces, get the social queues and is worried about the long term effects of mask wearing by children. Children have difficulty with social anxiety without covid and believes the long term affects this will destroy this generation. He said the masks get dirty, they are not changed regularly. He said the state of emergency is over, that Governor Mills is not putting pressure on the schools, that the CDC is recommending not requiring masks, the DOE is only recommending not requiring masks. We should back off the "safety first" mentality. Schools should provide education first and safety should be up to the parents, as they are the ones who train their kids, what kind of citizens they will be and where they will go in life. As taxpayers, if they do not want to wear a mask, they should not have to wear one. Taxpayers fund the schools, their money keeps it going and therefore they are the customers and he would like to think the customer is always right. He does not think we will get any better than now. There are school districts that are giving parent, students and teachers options to make decisions as the year goes. He feels that students have taken a backseat for too long, and any further, they will only have a future bagging groceries and not go anywhere in life. The risk is low for kids. We have tools now, such as vaccines. Teachers that disagree have the options of just getting done with their careers and leave education, or wear masks themselves or get more vaccinations to feel safer. He said the students are the priority. No more

safety first. Leave safety to the parents, leave education to the school. Open the schools and catch kids up from where we slipped behind last year. Kids today are not where their parents were at their age. We should not get scared everytime there is something on the news. Kids are the priority and their education. Kids are not going to die.

Fletcher Atkinson was addressing Item C, New Business, Safety Protocols. He has children entering kindergarten this year. He also does not agree that children should wear masks, as they need to be able to see their teacher's faces, see their friends' smiles. The decision should be left up to the parents.

Gretchen Morrow was addressing Item C, New Business, Safety Protocols. She has three children in our schools and is a nurse at the Togus VA. She supports universal masking for all students. She feels that it is more important for her children to be in school rather than to be quarantined over and over again. If keeping them in school full time means wearing a mask, then they should wear a mask. Last year, her child's teacher got Covid and because of the masks, no one in the classroom contracted it. She wants her children to be in school and safe. She referenced that last week, 121,000 children across this country contracted Covid and explained that the Delta Variant has changed things. She added that currently there are no beds available at all of the major hospitals, for patients with Covid and for other medical reasons. It is detrimental to keep kids out of school and there is proof that masks do work, as well as social distancing and air filters in the school to help with prevention. Masking will only work if done universally, not optionally.

Bill Smith was addressing Item C, New Business, Safety Protocol. He said last year there was a lot of confusion and chaos understanding Covid last year. He said that Covid does not pose a risk to children, and that it is a very well established fact from the past year and feels it has not been communicated well. He feels children should not wear masks in school as it will cause serious issues and harm to children. He feels if we say yes to masks now, that we will have to vaccinate them next year. He feels it would be cruel and wrong to make kids wear masks for another year. He does not think the school board should hide behind the CDC recommendations.

Jessica Trask added that she does not feel students, teachers and staff members should wear masks. Staff members have the choice not to work in a school and there are lots of work from home jobs. Teachers should be given a choice. They need to teach. Children need to see their faces. They could have an option of wearing a shield or a clear mask only. She is against choice. The children are our future and if we mess them up now, there is no going back. It is

do or die. If teachers choose to teach, then they are all in and should not wear masks. We need to get rid of masks.

4. Adjustments and Consent Agenda (20 min)

Note: Items may be removed from the Consent Agenda on the request of any one member; items not removed may be adopted by general consent without debate. Removed items may be scheduled for consideration immediately after the Consent agenda or placed on the agenda at the discretion of the board.

[Action]

Consent Agenda items:

- a. Approve the Minutes of the previous meeting as distributed
- b. Superintendent's Report - removed
- c. Approve the Committee Minutes as distributed
- d. Accept the Personnel Report - removed
- e. Accept the Policies as distributed:
 - i. GBJ - Personnel Records and Files - Second Reading
 - ii. KDD - Media Relations - Second Reading

Motion to accept the Consent Agenda items A, C and E.

Russell Gates - 1st

Lynette Conroy - 2nd

Motion passes 14-0-0

Richard DeVries said that we seem to have a high number of resignations over the summer and questioned if there was any particular reason for it. Mr. Tuttle said there really was no primary cause. There are a lot of jobs open around the state so some staff moved closer to home or to different positions.

Mr. Tuttle said the board should vote on the Personnel Report as there are several new teachers being hired and only the school board can hire teachers.

Motion to accept the Personnel Report

Richard DeVries - 1st

Rick Cote - 2nd

Motion passes 14-0-0

Mr. Tuttle wanted to draw the board's attention to the curriculum and technology section of the report as over the summer we received funding to expand our wifi

at each school to include the entire school campuses to allow community use. Deb Taylor said the network is open (no password required) and completely disconnected from our school networks.

Mr. Tuttle thanked everyone for all their hard work over the summer getting projects done, schools cleaned and said teachers are getting their rooms ready for the new school year.

5. Old Business: None

6. New Business: (90min)

- a. Temporarily waive the two-step policy approval process in order to urgently vote on policy BED - Remote Participation In School Board Meetings **[Action]**

Richard Devries - 1st

Deborah Myers - 2nd

Mr. Tuttle explained that when the state of emergency ended, the remote participation ended. The state legislature recognized that Zoom could be a great tool for school districts, especially ones that are all spread out. By doing the waiver and then approving the policy, it will allow the board members who are on Zoom to vote at this meeting. This is especially important to have as many board members as possible attend the meetings. The policy comes from Drummond Woodsum. There is a two step approval for policies, but in this instance we are proposing that the process is adjusted to skip the first reading in order for all board members to vote tonight.

Sandra Devaney - 1st

Richard Devries - 2nd

Motion passes 14-0-0

- b. BED - Remote Participation In School Board Meetings **[Action]**

Richard Devries - 1st (original motion)

Kimberly Hutchinson - 2nd

Sandra Devaney would like to add an amendment that board members give a 48 hour notice in order to participate remotely, unless it is an emergency.

Russell Gates - 1st Richard Devries - 2nd

Dustin Mellor asked what the guidelines would be for an emergency. Sandra Devaney cited that it would be a state emergency, a weather emergency, and emergency where the board needs to meet quickly. Sickness would also be considered an emergency. It will be taken on a case by case basis.

Mr. Tuttle said the intent of the policy is that we would prefer to meet in person, but if there is a reason that a board member cannot attend the chair would need to approve it.

Motion to approve the amendment passes 14-0-0

Motion to allow remote participation in a school board meeting, with a 48 hour notice given to the board chair unless there is an emergency.

Motion passes - 14-0-0

Mary Coventry, Suzanne Balbo and Ryan Carver have been allowed into the meeting at 7:32 p.m.

- c. **RSU 12 Safety Protocols and Learning Plan 2021-2022 [Action]**
Suggested Motion: To approve the RSU 12 Safety Protocols and Learning Plan for the Start of the 2021-2022 School Year as presented.

Rick Danforth moved to approve the RSU 12 Safety Protocols and Learning Plan for the start of the 2021-2022 School year, but amended that masks should be optional.

Rick Cote - 2nd

Richard Devries asked for the motion to be repeated with the amendment.

Ryan Carver asked for clarification if masks were optional.

James Willigar asked for clarification of the motion - it was explained that the motion in the agenda is a suggested motion, but Mr. Danforth made an initial motion.

Deborah Myers asked if it should be clarified that the language should state staff and students.

Rick Danforth said that wherever the language says "required" will be replaced with "optional."

Ryan Carver asked for clarification of what we are voting on.

Sandra Devaney explained that we have a motion to accept the plan as written with the language changing "required" to "optional."

James Willigar asked if the original motion should be read and then amended. Mr. Tuttle explained that the motion in the agenda is a suggested motion and that board members can make their own motion. Suggested motions are put in the agenda on action items to put us on the right track. Board members do not have to use the suggested motion and can make a new motion on their own.

Rick Danforth explained the motion and why he did not use the suggested wording and made his own motion.

Ryan Carver asked if we were still in discussion. He was instructed that he would have to wait to be recognized by the chair to speak in order.

Rick Cote said he seconded the motion and said that he is personally against masks in school, has protested it for two days and wants the kids to come to school as normal without masks. He may vote in favor of optional masks, but for right now he is against masks.

Lynette Conroy said that people had raised valid concerns but the school board's responsibility is to look at the experts and their data for the recommendations for the schools. She believes that masks should be mandatory. We should not base our decisions on anecdotal evidence or personal preference. She has a student in school and would prefer to have her child wear a mask and be a little uncomfortable rather than possibly contract Covid, no matter how small the risk, and become sick or spread it to others.

Ryan Carver said there is science that supports both sides of the mask debate, but the state is not requiring it and therefore the school board should not require them to be worn and the decision should be left up to the parents. If the state is not requiring it, neither should we.

Russell Gates shared information on a handout and supports the motion to make masks optional, though he does not feel masks are necessary. He appreciates the public comments from the parents. He said there are so many different outlets to listen to and get different opinions. He would support the motion to make masks optional and that it should be a parental decision. He asked Mr. Tuttle to explain the ventilation and filtration systems in our schools and how effective they are. Mr. Tuttle said he could not speak to how effective they are but did say that with all the layers of protections last year the fact that we did not have Covid spread through the building. He explained that we have ionizer systems in all of our schools, all of the rooms, that are supposed to help eliminate 90% of viruses and bacteria and are looking to add another layer of protection in an ultraviolet layer on the air exchangers. Last year, we had the ventilation system on full blast last year, even during the winter (which did cause our oil bill to skyrocket but we had Covid funds to help with that). We also have hand washing, hand sanitizer as additional layers of protection. Masks are an important part of the layered protections in our buildings.

James Willigar asked if we would be discussing and voting on UV lights or if it was separate. It is a separate item that will be coming up on the agenda.

Richard DeVries commented that in past years we would have high rates of absentees by the time we reached February due to colds and flus. With the mask mandates that we had, we did not have those kinds of numbers last year. He believes masks should be mandatory to keep our kids healthy.

Rick Danforth said he used the word optional because he knew it would be a hot issue and he is coming at it as a retired microbiologist who specialized in infectious diseases. He would give people the option to wear a mask, hoping they will do their research and wear an appropriate mask and not take it off when they speak. as long as it is a well fitting mask. He said would love to say no masks, our tools are in the ventilation and we should keep improving those, but we need to have a discussion on mandatory vaccination of staff members.

Lynette Conroy said the Delta Variant has complicated things and makes it difficult to set policy for the school year when we don't know what we don't know. That needs to be considered when setting policy for the whole year. If we are not going to require masks, then we need to re-consider adding a remote option back into the schools so that students are not missing school due to quarantines. It is detrimental to students to lose out on education.

Russell Gates addressed Richard Devries comments about cold and flu season saying that it is a natural process beneficial to children to help them build their own immune system, which is not possible if we constantly mask children.

Sandra Devaney asked to hear from Delia Dearnley, Special Ed Director as well as the principals for their points of views how things have been going in the classrooms last year and over the summer.

Delia Dearnley supports wearing a mask if it helps keep students in the seats. When students are out of school, they miss a lot of important things. She said students do get to see teacher's faces and their friend's faces throughout the school day and still keep them in school. Students are not wearing masks the entire school day, so that there are opportunities for them to see their teachers and friends throughout the day.

Mr. Tuttle explained that we did not reconvene the Re-opening Committee, which last year was given the rules and had to figure out the logistics on how to make it work. He explained it is frustrating in that while schools are told how many fire drills to have in a year, etc, that we are only being given a recommendation regarding masks which makes it more difficult. Masks were optional during summer school and a vast majority of students did not wear masks, though they did have to wear them on the bus. The plan comes from guidance from the federal CDC and the Maine DOE currently

only have a link available to those guidelines. On Friday, Mr. Tuttle received Standard Operating Procedure guidelines from the CDC that if the school is universally masked, the only person that would need to be quarantined is the child who has Covid. Because of this reason, he changed it to have masks be required in order to keep as many students in school as possible and as long as possible, instead of dealing with a group of students that would need to be quarantined which in turn puts pressure on the parents for daycare, etc while they are out of school for 10 days. If masks are optional, it would be similar to quarantining of close contacts as last year. The other difficult piece is that we can discuss things tonight but it could also change in a short amount of time, which is frustrating as we want to do the right thing for the kids.

Will Sugg asked how the revisiting of the plan would be conducted, citing Mr. Danforth's wording of the motion if we went with the optional masks and then decided we were wrong. Mr. Tuttle said that the plan will be updated regularly as things change or we receive new information or guidance. The plan was updated a few times last year, but could conceivably come before the board again each month. He pointed out that some of the guidelines have changed since last year, such as students only have to be three feet apart instead of six which is easier for group activities, that students can remove the mask if they need to for learning, that mask breaks are not as relegated and there is more flexibility to put learning back in place. It does not feel as restrictive this year in comparison to last year.

Ryan Carver commented that the problem with leaving it up to teachers is that each teacher has a different belief and standard of how to do mask breaks or how many. He does not feel that is fair to the kids and we should leave the decision to the parents since the state is not mandating masks.

Kimberly Hutchinson asked for clarification - if the mask wearing is optional, do only the students not wearing a mask go home? Mr. Tuttle said that if a school is universally masked (everyone), then only one student would need to go home. If masks are optional, then all close contacts would have to be quarantined as well as staff members.

Rick Danforth asked for clarification on how that was washed with Dr. Shah and testing. He said that if we are going to require masks, then the correct masks need to be worn and worn properly, not cloth masks that are shoved in backpacks or pockets and not washed correctly.

Mr. Tuttle explained that as a universally masked school, the only student that would have to quarantine rather than a group of students, and did agree that the information does and could change. As frustrating as it is, his objective is to keep students in school rather than home quarantine.

Rick Danforth asked if we were signing up for pool testing. Mr. Tuttle said we have signed up for pool testing. If someone is tested and is negative,

they would not be considered a close contact. We would need a certain percentage of the buildings to reap the benefits. If you are vaccinated, you do not need to be quarantined and most of our teachers are vaccinated and would be able to remain in the classrooms. Universally masked schools will have less quarantining.

Doug Morier said that it is technically not a mandate from the CDC, but stated very clearly that this is the process you will need to follow in order to prevent shutdowns and quarantines. If the schools follow the plan, the chance of shutdown becomes very remote.

Ryan Carver said if they are laying it out for us, they would make it mandatory. They are not doing that this year and are leaving it up to us.

Sandra Devaney cited part of the plan that asked who would be responsible for sports and building use activities. Mr. Tuttle said that the school principals will be making those decisions. For the fall, there are no guidelines for soccer since it is outside. People will be able to use the buildings as long as the protocols are followed.

Mary Coventry said that, unlike where we were last year, Covid is evolving and we have more options despite less clarity from the CDC. We have flexibility within the guidelines that we can give students during the school day. It is not an all day mask wearing. We can also look at it in a month and look at where it stands and refine our plans. We might have more input and data. She wonders if there is communication that can be made from the points made to show the precautions but also the flexibility we will have.

Lynette Conroy asked if the board did not comply with the recommendations, will we be opening ourselves up to any litigation or liability if something were to happen. Mr. Tuttle said that schools are always vulnerable to litigation, but in circumstances that are less controversial, we always follow the recommendations. To not follow a recommendation would be rare, but he did not know if it would open us up to litigation. He said that a mask policy can be changed as we are talking about how to start the school year. He pointed out that in the public comment, the union is asking for masks to be required for the start of the school year. Mr. Tuttle also commented that the masks are not there to protect the teachers, in reference to the earlier comment regarding the choice to teach and if teachers could find another job, but more for protection of the community as a whole. Most of our staff is vaccinated.

Ryan Carver made a motion to cease discussions and move into a vote.

Richard Devries - 2nd

Motion passes 15-2-0

Motion to pass the RSU 12 Safety Protocols and Learning Plan with masks optional

Hand vote = 10 no, 7 yes

Weighted vote 6172 no, 4936 yes

Motion fails

Motion to accept the RSU 12 Safety Protocols and Learning Plan as presented

Doug Morier - 1st

Lynette Conroy - 2nd

James Willigar made the motion to add remote learning to the Learning Plan.

Ryan Carver - 2nd

Mr. Tuttle let the board know that remote learning was a lot of work last year (shortened school day, etc) and it is hard to say if it was really successful, but we did our best. It may cost more money as we would potentially need to hire more teachers to offer remote learning this year.

Will Sugg said it is one thing to make accommodations for a sick student that is out, but it is a huge undertaking for a remote option to be added back in and to put that much work on every teacher. It would not be beneficial to have that kind of parallel again this year. Mr. Tuttle clarified that we will educate any students that are quarantining, out sick, etc, but last year that was not entirely successful and put a lot of pressure on teachers. It was very difficult. We would need to have a better plan in place in order to provide remote learning to students. We are no longer in a state of emergency which dictated the need for remote learning. A remote learning plan needs to be good, robust, thought out and will cost money.

James Willigar said it is a tough situation and that no matter what we decide, someone is not going to be happy, But, he feels that the remote option is necessary to provide more flexibility to parents. There is a lot of gray area for remote learning vs. in chair learning. He understands the staffing, money and logistics, but says we are spending money on this no matter what. He commented that it is concerning that if we are saying no masks as a policy, when it is still ultimately up to the parents. We cannot

have a policy saying masks are not allowed to be worn. They need to be universal or optional. We need to be able to provide remote options.

Mr. Tuttle said, while he did not believe that the teachers would be able to do remote learning again, but there is access to online programs through some grant funding that some districts have done.

Dustin Mellor commented that we are expanding technology and that we should be using remote learning. He gave an example that he has taken college classes in which a professor has simply set up a camera on his desk and taught a class through Zoom. He does not understand why we could not set up a zoom for the limited number of students and broadcast from the classroom. He does not think it would cost much money and does not understand what the stresses are on the teachers to provide remote learning.

Lynette Conroy thinks it is premature to discuss remote learning and feels the two topics should be separated. She would like to table the remote learning to the next school board meeting.

Ryan Carver said that if the school board is going to strip our students of being able to not wear a mask, then we should offer remote learning to give the parents the option to stay home and participate that way.

James Willigar brought up the amendment because it was stated in the original plan that it will not be offered.

Richard Devries said it would be expensive to set up remote learning and do it correctly, as we would need to have several teachers to work with each grade level, setting up lesson plans and working with each student. It would be a significant cost.

Deborah Myers said that based on her experience from last year, teachers would not be able to survive it and that students would suffer delays in their learning.

Rick Danforth commented that doing something in an emergency situation is one thing, but students do not all have the same internet capabilities, some not at all. We are not in the emergency state and do not have access to those protections and funding. We should keep it on the shelf for discussions in case something happens again, but we should be careful of what we are setting up for the future.

Russell Gates commented that he was a member of the finance committee last year and that remote learning was a nightmare.

Russell Gates motions to move the question to vote on the amendment of adding remote learning to the plan and to move the question on the previous motion.

Rick Danforth - 2nd

Motion to move the question passes 17-0-0

Motion to add the amendment of remote learning to the plan fails

13 no, 4 yes,

The Board is back to the original motion of approving the Safety Protocols and Learning Plan as presented.

Ryan Carver disagreed with the motion as he wanted to add another motion.

Sandra Devaney explained how the motion from Russell Gates was to move the question on the amendment and the suggested motion, which stops the debate.

Ryan Carver did not feel it was clear. He felt he was not being allowed to speak and add another amendment. Sandra Devaney said she was trying to be clear about where we are. She explained Russell Gates' motion again. Ryan Carver again disagreed that it was not clear to him.

James Willigar questioned how the motions presented by Russell Gates were presented and asked if they should have been two separate motions. She explained that Russell Gates motioned it and Rick Danforth seconded the motion.

Rick Danforth clarified that we are moving back to the original motion.

The motion made is to move the motion to the original motion.

Motion passes 16-0-1 (Dustin Mellor abstained)

Ryan Caver asked if this is where he would motion for an amendment and was told that was correct. Ryan Carver made a motion for an amendment to the Learning Plan language be changed from "mandatory" masks to "no" masks.

Rick Danforth - 2nd

James Willigar questioned how we could make a policy to state that we would make a policy as a board that you cannot wear a mask.

Rick Danforth said the terminology that it would simply be worded that masks would not be used as a tool. Masks would not be mentioned in the plan. Ryan Carver agreed with what Rick Danforth said and wanted his amendment to reflect that.

Mr. Tuttle said that Ryan Carver clarified his amendment that the whole section regarding masks would be deleted from the plan.

James Willigar asked if it would change the bus. Mr. Tuttle said it could not change the bus as it is not a choice, but a federal requirement. There is a different section in the plan on transportation that would need to be kept.

Doug Morier commented that this particular amendment would remove any suggestion for guidance. He also addressed Russell Gates' information, saying that the American Academy of Pediatrics is very strongly on the side of the CDC recommendations. Their organization has always felt that students should be in school five days a week and agree it is safer with masks. He also addressed Ryan Carver's comments that while it does not seem clear, the guidelines do state exactly what schools need to be done in order to stay open and what happens if the recommendations are not followed. He further stated that what the staff did last year worked, was a good plan and kept us open.

Ryan Carver said that the government is not clear and that last year, it was clear. Masks should not be required since they are not mandatory.

Richard Devries commented on Russell Gates' handout saying that 13% of Covid cases affect children and we cannot afford to lose 13% of our student population.

Amendment fails 11 no, 5 yes, 1 abstain (Deborah Myers abstained)

Weighted vote: 6446 against, 4662 in favor

Motion to accept the RSU 12 Safety Protocols and Learning Plan as presented

Motion passes 10 yes, 7 no

Weighted vote: 6172 yes, 4936 no

Richard Devries is requesting updates next month on any changes.

Will Sugg asked if we would be able to have some hard data behind schools that are optional vs. schools that are mandatory. Mr. Tuttle said he would try to get some information.

Russell Gates asked if we could do a survey on how many parents will not allow their students to return due to mandatory masks.

Jessica Trask asked if school funding would go down. Mr. Tuttle said that funding would go down if enrollment goes down.

Kimberly Hutchinson asked if it means that if a student has covid, they are the only one who does not come to school the next day. Mr. Tuttle said that is the guidelines from the SOP's, but it could potentially change in the future. Ryan Carver asked if it was just speculation. Mr. Tuttle explained that it was what the guidelines say right now.

d. Public Comment on Use of American Recovery Act Funding **[Action]**

Suggested Motion: To recommend use of ESSER III ARP funds to maintain staffing, address student academic/emotional/health needs, and other elements that will improve our financial situation during the pandemic. In addition, facilities improvements to improve the health of the classrooms should be included in this effort.

Richard Devries - 1st

Deborah Myers - 2nd

Mr. Tuttle explained that this motion came from the finance and facilities committee regarding Covid funds and how they will be used up until September, 2024. The funds can be used to maintain current staffing which has been done previously to balance the current budget.

Ryan Carver asked for clarification on what the board was voting on as he could not hear.

Motion passes 17-0-0

e. UVC System installed in ventilation system **[Action]**

Suggested Motion: To install a UVC system in RSU 12 ventilation systems as recommended by the Facilities Committee.

Richard Devries - 1st

Russell Gates - 2nd

Dustin Mellor asked when the system would be installed. Mr. Tuttle said it would depend on how installations are being scheduled as they have been

backed up. Dustin Mellor asked if it would be done while students were in school. Mr. Tuttle explained that it would be during a vacation.

James Willigar asked if the committee provided any information on how many hours they are effective, how long the bulbs lasted, and how much they cost. Mr. Tuttle explained that the information was presented last spring, but there is no bulb and it has a 15 year life span.

Dustin Mellor asked how we would be maintaining the equipment.

Richard Devries added that it will make the system more efficient as well.

Motion passes 16-0-0 (Will Sugg left the meeting)

f. Farm to School Grant **[Informational]**

RSU 12 received the USDA Farm to School Grant for \$100,000 and we are partnering with RSU 10. This is a competitive grant offered across the country and we have tried twice before to get the grant. The goal of the grant is to help us use as much local produce as possible and training for staff.

g. Board Committees **[Informational]**

Board members will be receiving an online survey of what board committees they would like to join. Board members should rank their choices and can be on multiple committees. Committee participation is not required but highly recommended. Meetings are generally held between 3-5 pm. Zoom was used last year and may be an option this year to help board members be involved. The Negotiations Committee is in particular need of board members.

h. Chelsea PreK Playground **[Action]**

Suggested Motion: To approve the installation of a PreK playground at Chelsea Elementary School.

Russell Gates made a motion for unanimous consent to accept items h, i, j, k and l.

Richard Devries - 2nd

James Willigar questioned if we are able to do such a vote under Robert's Rules, asking if it should be a consent agenda. Sandra Devaney said it could be done. He felt it was not a consent agenda, and could not be put together. She asked if James Willigar had issues with voting on all of them and he stated he did. He said as far as the rules are concerned, it should be done separately. She explained that it was to speed up the process to vote on everything at once. Mr. Tuttle explained that it had to be unanimous, so if one board member disagreed then the agenda items needed to be done separately.

Richard Devries asked if the Prek playground was in our budget. Mr. Tuttle said that Headstart is paying for that.

Motion fails to vote on h, i, j, k and l as a bundle

Voting on item H

Doug Morier - 1st

Rick Cote - 2nd

Motion passes 15-0-0 (Deborah Myers left the meeting)

- i. **Palermo Consolidated School Daycare sponsored by Boys and Girls Club. [Action]**

Suggested Motion: To initiate a daycare service at Palermo Consolidated School in partnership with the Boys and Girls Club.

Russell Gates - 1st

Richard Devries - 2nd

Mr. Tuttle explained that two daycares have closed in Palermo and the Boys and Girls Club have agreed to set up daycare on site at no cost to the RSU. Having a daycare on site may also help to increase enrollment numbers at Palermo School.

Motion passes 15-0-0

- j. **Cony bus [Action]**
Suggested Motion: To provide a bus to Cony if it is fully funded by the bus riders.

Richard Devries - 1st

Russell Gates - 2nd

Mr. Tuttle explained that this option is open every year. Cony has not provided a bus in ten years. We do not send buses to any of our high schools, some of those districts send buses to us for transportation. If parents can get organized and pay for the bus, which is approximately \$15,000 for the year then the RSU would make accommodations.

Russell Gates explained how the situation went two years ago with the cost of the bus, how there were sponsors but not enough actual student riders.

Motion passes 15-0-0

k. **Five Towns CSD Tuition Agreements [Action]**

Suggested Motion: To pay the additional debt service amount as part of the Tuition Agreement with Five Towns CSD. For the 2021-2022 school year, this amount is \$1,127.51.

We currently have one student there and Five Town CSD/Camden High School is asking for us to sign a tuition agreement that is greater than the average of tuition that we normally pay for other tuition. Their tuition rate is figured out based on the percentage of debt for their tech center.

Richard Devries - 1st

Rick Cote - 2nd

Dustin Mellor asked why the student was switching schools. We do not have a reason, but the tuition is still cheaper than schools such as Erskine Academy.

Doug Morier asked for clarification of why we would be paying more than other high schools and if the cost would be reverted to the student.

Mr. Tuttle explained how the state figures out the state rates and anything above that would require a tuition agreement. If voted down, the cost would revert to the student and their family. We currently do not have any tuition agreements like this.

Rick Danforth asked if this would be a first and would set a precedent. Mr. Tuttle explained that this was the first since he has been with the district,

James Willigar asked if it would set a precedent and if the board would have to vote on it every year.

Dustin Mellor asked if we could pay for all four years at once.

James Willigar said the rates could change each year.

Lynette Conroy said the sibling factor could make it more expensive in future years.

Doug Morier is concerned about voting for one person, one time when it is a statutory issue.

Mr. Tuttle said he has never seen this type of agreement before and they are charging extra to fund their new technology center. There are towns that send their students to Camden exclusively and have no choice, but we have very few students that go to Camden HS.

James Willigar worries that it could set a precedent for other districts to add cost to their tuition and does not feel that we should go out of bounds of what we practice already.

Kimberly Hutchinson stated that the board does change its mind and could vote differently in the future.

Motion fails: hand vote 8 no, 7 yes

Weighted vote 5873 no - 4243 yes

I. **Freedom of Access Officer [Action]**

Suggested Motion: To appoint the RSU 12 Superintendent as the Freedom of Access officer.

Richard Devries - 1st

Russell Gates -2nd

Motion passes 15-0-0

7. Executive Session: Enter Executive Session Pursuant to Title 1 M.R.S.A. §405 (6) (A)
Personnel Matter - Executive Session Cancelled

8. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn

Rick Cote - 1st

Doug Morier - 2nd

15-0-0

Meeting ended at 9:34 pm