

Board of Directors –FSAS MINUTES

*Special Meeting
04/04/2022*

Approved 04/14/2022

Meeting date, time 04/04/2022 6:00PM | Meeting location Online, Zoom

Meeting called by Sally Morris, Chair

Type of meeting Special Meeting

Facilitator Sally Morris, Chair

Secretary Carolyn Beem

Attendees:

Sally Morris, Chair
Joe Mattis, Vice Chair
Carolyn Beem, Secretary
Ben Kramer, Treasurer
Susan Doughty, Board Member

Also Present:

Jacinda Cotton-Castro, Executive Director
Mara Wiggin, Becky Wick

Absent: Kimberly Allen, Board Member

Meeting called to order at 6:02 PM.

AGENDA TOPICS:

CALL TO ORDER - WELCOME, BOARD CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Public Comment/Questions/Chat:

Jen Evertt (chat) - Thank you for your careful consideration of all the factors involved in switching to optional masking at school and for sharing your rationale behind each change. It's clear that a lot of time and energy has gone into this process and we greatly appreciate it! I have 2 questions/comments regarding the proposed changes. The proposal eliminates the 6' spacing requirement while eating, does that also mean that sneeze guards would no longer be used? If that is the case, should there be a provision to require 6' spacing and/or sneeze guards while eating for any individual who is required to mask because of a Covid exposure or positive Covid status? In addition, would the conditions that require a return to full masking also trigger a return to the 6' distancing and sneeze guards while eating? It's proposed that individuals testing positive for Covid may return to school after 8 days and be required to wear a mask for

an additional 2 days because they can be contagious for 10 days. Having a contagious person return to an unmasked community, even if that individual is wearing a mask, seems like an unnecessary risk. If it's decided that masks will be optional then I would like individuals who test positive to be required to stay home for the full 10 days. Sally responded that sneeze guards would not be addressed at this forum.

Judy Kann - Preschool teacher. Masking is generally to protect other children. So many of our kids are vaccinated and the immunity doesn't last. Easier for kids not to keep changing process. They don't social distance, because they're little. And when they need comfort they get close. Masks are, in my mind, to protect each other.

Vaness Lavat (chat) - happy to support optional masking

Erica Shirley - I also sent a letter to the board with my comments. I work in special ed - there is no germ containment, no social distancing, but the school has not seen any uptick in cases. Going maskless provides a sense of hope. As a parent I advocate for what's best for my child. I think it's important to have a choice. I was frustrated that the pre-K group is being excluded from this policy. I think it should be the same level of choice for all students and parents. CDC guidelines indicate the mask is basically to protect yourself. I really think the parents should be deciding what's right for their children.

Penny Collins (chat) - I sent comments by email ahead so don't want to take a lot of time. Thank you for the efforts made to revisit this topic to try and find a space that feels good for everyone. I am in favor of optional masking unless our community is experiencing a surge in cases; optional outdoor masks for all; continued careful screening, testing, and other measures. I believe when cases are low families and staff members should have choice. Children are capable of shifting between using masks and not using them - we see this in our lives outside of school. I am in favor of giving them breaks when case counts permit. Russell School is now four weeks of optional masks and no additional covid cases. Thanks!

Michael Davidov (chat) - My concern is simply understanding: when do we stop these policies? If not now, I'm not sure I understand when we would stop. The risk to children has always been extraordinarily low. It is even lower now and it's starting to feel that some folks believe this should continue indefinitely. All along, we have discussed adhering to CDC guidance, and the CDC is no longer recommending masking. So why is it right now that we stop listening to the CDC? Our children are trying to learn facial expressions and that is, FOR ME, a much greater concern at this point.

Erica Shirley (chat) - I completely agree with the above comments from Penny and Michael

Liz Harrington (chat) - Please vote for mask optional. Thank you

Vanessa Levat (chat) - I agree to allow pre-k the option for choice. And also agree with the 10 day quarantine if positive

Elisha Anderson (chat) - Masks optional please

Erica Shirley - I still have questions why this does not apply to all students.

Liz Harrington (chat) - I agree about the CDC recommending mask optional and why we would decide not to follow that recommendation now after doing so for 2 years.

Marie Camillo Reimensnyder - I think Judy's points clearly address the reasons for keeping unvaccinated preschoolers masked.

Jennie Raby (chat)- Thank you for all of your work on the updates to the policies with the safety of the students and remaining in school being the focus! And thank you for adding a policy regarding returning to masking should cases increase. That's proactive and appreciated given the uncertainty of covid.

Michael Davidov (chat) - On behalf of Jessie: when will we re-evaluate the preschool policy again?

Vanessa Levat - I have a first grader who was, along with classmates, out of school throughout the year with illness specific to colds; I don;t see this as being handled much differently. I fully support parents' decision that Pre-k should be mask-optional.

Health Committee - Presenting Policies

Consider Updated COVID 19 Health Policy

1. Review Policy and Updates

Susan shared that according to CDC guidance, masks do protect the individual and we want to avoid any possibility of an outbreak. We also know that this is an evolving process.

Becky - we've actually had the most cases of COVID in Pre-k (with the exception of the 5th grade outbreak), and most coming from inside the school. Immunity does wear off, as opposed to vaccinations. It's difficult with the younger students because they don't social distance, by nature. If they had been unmasked it's hard to know how many more would have tested positive; More kids in Kindergarten and above are vaccinated than the pre-K class, which is why pre-K was singled out.

1. Board Discussion

Ben - a giant thank you to all who have put in monumental work. We're all working toward the same goal - eliminating masks. But let's all remember the common goal - keeping our kids safe while unmasking. Where we differ is the 'when'. Regarding the policy, I appreciate that we are following CDC guidelines. I would like to see a policy that pertains to everyone, and not exclude pre-K. With a week and a half until April break, even if we had a super spreader, this policy would take us to the end of the school year. Still not in favor of outdoor masking; would like to see the trigger from 2 to 3 individuals/cases in a class reinstated. Regarding the paragraph that was added in Section 4. *Changing Conditions a. Return to Masking* would prefer to change that from "will return to required indoor masking..." to "may return..." Becky responded the addition was to be more cautious to mitigate spreading.

Joe - Clarifications - Good decisions are made on good information. Questions: What metrics are we using to determine outdoor masking would be required?; Natural immunity is often as strong as vaccination - why was this not included?; this policy proposes being more conservative than CDC in going from the 3 to 2 cases as a triggering event, not sure I agree with going more conservative. What data are we using to determine what's appropriate for different age groups?; CDC and DOE comment - this was done because of 'quarantining' but thought we were talking about masking; Schools do different things - it's not that one school cares more than another.

Becky - immunity lasts for 90 days - it's included in 'boxes' of policy; the noted 15% absenteeism regards to any disease, and is not specific to COVID (15% is about 35 individuals in the school)

Susan - regarding the metrics - when CDC uses hospitalization it's mostly around what they determine causes the spread, typically it's a child picking up the infection from a grandparent or older individual. This is a very contagious variant, s other are still a lot of unknowns.

Carolyn - Reiterated the gratitude for all the thoughtful work that has gone into this process - from the Health Committee, the staff and the parents. Shared some of the concerns already addressed. Want this policy to be as clear as possible so that anyone in a what-if situation can understand expectations, and that it's based on solid data and guidance and consistent in how we use that data. Agree specifically on reverting to 3 from 2 individual class cases as a triggering event, and *may return* vs *will return*, as identified above.

Susan - no further comments

Sally - provided clarity that outdoor masking as identified in the policy is consistent with CDC guidance.

1. Board Vote

Motion to approve Updated COVID19 Health Policy as presented, with the revision of removing the pre-kindergarten students and pre-kindergarten staff exclusion (Policy section 1.b.i): Joe

Second: Ben

Discussion: Becky - can we hold off on this change until the April break as we gather more data? Susan - hear the parents wanting to make this decision, and wanting to keep from needing to go remote; parents are frustrated but we as professionals and as a board need to do what's best for the children.

Ben - procedural question regarding amendments

Motion vote: 0:6 opposed

Motion did not carry

Motion to adopt proposed COVID Policy changes to be effective Wednesday, April 6, 2022, with the following changes:

In section 1.b.i.: Remove pre-kindergarten students and pre-kindergarten staff;

In the Event / Response boxed section - Multiple Confirmed Cases of COVID-19: leave sentence as originally stated 3 positive cases in a single classroom; and, In section 4 Changing Conditions, 4a. Return to Masking: change "The school will return..." to "The school may return..." : Ben

Second: Carolyn

Discussion: Joe question regarding typo in the last section.

Motion approved 3:2.

Meeting evaluation and adjournment

Motion to adjourn: Joe

Second: Ben

Discussion: none

Approved: 5:0

Meeting adjourned at 7:10 PM