

Central Berkshire Regional School Committee
Regular Meeting

Thursday, February 17, 2022 7:00 p.m.

Meeting Held Via Remote

A regular meeting of the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee, held remotely, on Thursday, February 17, 2022, was called to order by Chair Craft-Reiss at 7:00 p.m.

For the record, the chair does not vote unless noted.

Pledge of Allegiance

ROLL CALL

Present: Members Alpert (7:07), Bartels, Case, DiFazio, DiTomasso, Eberwein, Emerson, Gelinas, Lacatell, Lattizzori, Lounsbury, Peters, Stuart, Tucker (7:05), and Chair Craft-Reiss.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Superintendent Leslie Blake-Davis, Director of Finance & Operations Gregory Boino, Recording Secretary Michelle White, and members of the audience.

Chair Craft-Reiss stated the meeting was being audio and video recorded. She informed the audience that any comments on the public hearing would be allowed after the budget presentation.

ARTICLE 12373 RESPONSES FROM THE AUDIENCE

Joe Diver asked the committee members to reject or amend the face covering recommendations as presented; based on remarks made at the Safety and Wellness subcommittee there is a 73% vaccination rate in Berkshire County. Mr. Diver also noted that Dr. Doyle recommended making masks optional. The state mandate of masks will drop on February 28 and feels all schools should follow as well.

A. Public Hearing FY23 Budget

1. **Budget Presentation**

Director Boino and Superintendent Blake-Davis presented the budget (filed with the official minutes). This can also be found online.

In response to Mr. Diver's question regarding a health insurance premium increase, Director Boino responded there is an 8% increase. Mr. Diver also questioned the need of a full-time versus part-time assistant superintendent. Superintendent Blake-Davis said with the new person it will be a full-time job with all the responsibilities, especially with teaching and learning a large portion of the job,

Mr. Diver also mentioned receiving an email from someone who had been at a meeting at the high school after hours and noticed smartboards and other devices were still on. Director Boino responded the district is aware and looking into this issue.

Chair Craft-Reiss advised that the Safety and Wellness report will be moved up to accommodate the audience.

2. **Comments from the Audience**

ARTICLE 12374 STUDENT AFFAIRS

A. Student Report

1. **High School Representative – Sheffield Drewry**

Sheffield Drewry reported the environmental club Green Umbrella has been preparing to go to the elementary schools to teach students about the environment including recycling; in celebration of Valentine's Day Best Buddies held a card making event and a sledding event.

B. Other

ARTICLE 12375 FINANCIAL REPORT

A. Warrants

No warrants signed.

B. Gifts and Donations

ARTICLE 12376 SECRETARY'S REPORT

A. Minutes of the Regular Meeting of February 10, 2022

MOVED BY MEMBER LACATELL, SECONDED BY MEMBER LATTIZZORI

To approve the minutes of the regular meeting of February 10, 2022, as distributed.

Member Stuart asks that members who make amendments be noted in the minutes to have it on record.

ROLL CALL

Ayes: Members Alpert, Bartels, Case, DiFazio, DiTomasso, Eberwein, Emerson, Gelinas, Lacatell, Lattizzori, Lounsbury, Peters, Stuart, Tucker and Chair Craft-Reiss.

Nays: None.

Abstentions: None.

Motion carries unanimously.

ARTICLE 12377 COMMUNICATIONS

B. Report of the Chair

1. November 2022 School Committee Election

Chair Craft-Reiss reported further information will be given as the time gets closer.

Members whose term expires November 2022

Becket	Dr. Barbara Craft-Reiss
Cummington	Todd Emerson
Dalton	John Bartels, Rob DiFazio, Dr. Amy Gelinas, Ellen Lattizzori
Hinsdale	David Stuart

2. Annual Town Meeting Dates

Dalton - Confirmed	May 02, 2022	7:00 p.m.
Windsor – Confirmed	May 02, 2022	Time TBD
Cummington (first Friday in May?)	May 06, 2022	7:00 p.m.
Hinsdale - Confirmed	May 11, 2022	7:00 p.m.
Washington - Confirmed	May 11, 2022	7:00 p.m.
Becket - Confirmed	May 14, 2022	7:00 p.m.
Peru - Confirmed	June 04, 2022	6:00 p.m.

ARTICLE 12378 SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Reports

1. Safety and Wellness

a. Report

Member Lounsbury reported at the subcommittee's most recent meeting that members public comments were split 50/50 on the discussion of face coverings. The medical representatives noted that there might be an uptick in cases after the winter break. Dr. Doyle commented there is a 73% vaccination rate in the county; cases are dropping in Dalton, Dr. Dallenbach advises against removing masks especially for the younger unvaccinated students. The MIAA no longer require wearing masks during sports; pool testing helps determine who is positive.

b. Discussion and Vote on Revisions to Policy 6331: Face Coverings

MOVED BY MEMBER LOUNSBURY, SECONDED BY MEMBER ALPERT

That as of February 28, 2022, Policy 6331: Face Coverings will no longer pertain to students actively participating in extra-curricular and athletic events in accordance with MIAA guidelines.

ROLL CALL

Ayes: Members Alpert, Bartels, Case, DiFazio, DiTomasso, Eberwein, Emerson, Gelinas, Lacatell, Lattizzori, Lounsbury, Peters, Stuart, Tucker and Chair Craft-Reiss.

Nays: None.

Abstentions: None.

Motion carries unanimously.

Member Lounsbury reported with the participants in pool testing and high vaccination rates in the high school the subcommittee is recommending the next motion.

MAIN MOTION

MOVED BY MEMBER LOUNSBURY, SECONDED BY MEMBER EMERSON

That as of March 21, 2022, Policy 6331: Face Covering will only pertain to students and staff in grades PK - 8 and Wahconah High School will be a mask optional school setting except in the three situations listed below:

1. *After a five-day isolation and/or quarantine period, wear a mask around others for an additional five days, except when eating, drinking, or outdoors. When an individual returns to work/school after they have tested positive or were a close contact they will need to wear a mask when they return to work/school day 6 and through day 10.*
2. *Staff and students will need to wear a mask when in the school health offices.*
3. *Staff and students will need to continue to wear masks when using bus transportation, per federal order*

Member DiTomasso commented that she is hopeful the incidents of infection may lessen in March and to consider masks optional PK-8 and vote on at the March 24 meeting. Member Lounsbury stated there is a Safety and Wellness meeting on the 17th. Member Stuart supports Member DiTomasso's comment and suggests striking PK-8 from the motion.

Amendment #1

MOVED BY MEMBER STUART, SECONDED BY MEMBER GELINAS

To amend the motion as follows:

That as of March 21, 2022, in reference of Policy 6331: Face Covering, Wahconah High School will be a mask optional school setting except in the three situations listed below:

- 1. After a five-day isolation and/or quarantine period, wear a mask around others for an additional five days, except when eating, drinking, or outdoors. When an individual returns to work/school after they have tested positive or were a close contact they will need to wear a mask when they return to work/school day 6 and through day 10.*
- 2. Staff and students will need to wear a mask when in the school health offices.*
- 3. Staff and students will need to continue to wear masks when using bus transportation, per federal order*

Member Stuart responded to comments that he would like to have two motions, one for the high school and the other for grades PK-8.

Member Gelinas feels the high school should be mask optional on February 28.

Member Lacatell commented Safety and Wellness considered mask optional for all grades on March 21 and feels there is no reason for this amendment.

There was further discussion on the wording of the motion.

VOTE ON Amendment #1

ROLL CALL

Ayes: Members Eberwein, Gelinas, Lacatell, Lattizzori, Lounsbury, Peters, Stuart, and Tucker.

Nays: Members Alpert, Bartels, Case, DiFazio, DiTomasso, Emerson.

Abstentions: Chair Craft-Reiss.

Amendment carries.

The motion on the floor is now the amended motion.

Amendment #2

MOVED BY MEMBER GELINAS, SECONDED BY MEMBER STUART

To amend the motion by changing the date from March 21, 2022 to February 28, 2022.

Member Lattizzori commented on the data that shows an uptick in cases after breaks and feels the options of masks should be kept until March 21. Members commented about the higher vaccination rate at the high school and that March 21 seems too far away. It was noted that masks are not being worn properly now; with the high vaccination rate the district could apply for a waiver from the state, but Superintendent Blake-Davis advised they could no longer apply for a waiver.

Member Lacatell, commented Dr. Doyle had stated the Omicron evades counter measures and vaccinations; we need to be consistent be with students; the sooner we allow no mask the more infections; March makes more sense. Members commented there are always vacations around the corner; it's time to make the masks optional as this has been very stressful on the students.

Vote on Amendment #2

ROLL CALL

Ayes: Members Case, DiFazio, Eberwein, Gelinas, Peters, and Stuart.

Nays: Members Alpert, Bartels, DiTomasso, Emerson, Lacatell, Lattizzori, Lounsbury, Tucker and Chair Craft-Reiss.

Abstentions: None.

Amendment fails.

Member Lacatell mentioned that if the amended motion fails, masks will be required at all schools in accordance with Policy 6331.

Amendment #3

MOVED BY MEMBER GELINAS, SECONDED BY MEMBER STUART

To amend the motion by changing the date from March 21, 2022 to March 14, 2022.

Vote on Amendment #3

ROLL CALL

Ayes: Members Case, DiFazio, Eberwein, Gelinas, Peters, and Stuart.

Nays: Members Alpert, Bartels, DiTomasso, Emerson, Lacatell, Lattizzori, Lounsbury, Tucker and Chair Craft-Reiss.

Abstentions: None.

Amendment fails.

Vote on Amended motion

ROLL CALL

Ayes: Members Alpert, Bartels, Case, DiFazio, DiTomasso, Emerson, Lacatell, Lattizzori, Lounsbury, Peters, Tucker, and Chair Craft-Reiss.

Nays: Members Eberwein, Gelinas and Stuart.

Abstentions: None.

Motion carries.

MOVED BY MEMBER STUART, SECONDED BY MEMBER GELINAS

That as of February 28, 2022, Policy 6331: Face Covering will only pertain to students and staff in grades PK - 8 will be a mask optional school setting except in the three situations listed below:

- 1. After a five-day isolation and/or quarantine period, wear a mask around others for an additional five days, except when eating, drinking, or outdoors. When an individual returns to work/school after they have tested positive or were a close contact they will need to wear a mask when they return to work/school day 6 and through day 10.*
- 2. Staff and students will need to wear a mask when in the school health offices.*
- 3. Staff and students will need to continue to wear masks when using bus transportation, per federal order*

Member Stuart commented younger students are more affected by the masking with their learning.

It was noted that vaccination rates in the elementary schools are less than 50% and the middle school is close to 60%; students may not get sick, but can still be carriers.

Member Emerson asked for the motion to be voted on.

Member Tucker asked to see how mask optional goes at the high school and then reconsider the other schools.

ROLL CALL

Ayes: Members Eberwein, Gelinas, and Stuart.

Nays: Members Alpert, Bartels, Case, DiFazio, DiTomasso, Emerson, Lacatell, Lattizzori, Lounsbury, Peters, Tucker, and Chair Craft-Reiss.

Abstentions: None.

Motion fails.

Chair Craft-Reiss stated that grades PK-8 mask options would be discussed at the March 24 meeting.

c. Discussion and Vote to Waive Second Reading of Policy 6331: Face Coverings

1. Curriculum
 - a. Report

Member Lattizzori reported the subcommittee has not met yet. The March 14 meeting topics will include winter benchmarking and the 2022/23 school calendar.

2. Finance
 - a. Report

Member Peters reported the subcommittee met February 23 to discuss the budget.

3. Policy
 - a. Report

Member DiFazio reported the subcommittee has not met.

b. Approval of Second Reading Revision of Policy 3400: Professional Staff Hiring

MOVED BY MEMBER DIFAZIO, SECONDED BY MEMBER DITOMASSO

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee approves the second reading revision of Policy 3400: Professional Staff Hiring, as recommended by the Policy Subcommittee.

ROLL CALL

Ayes: Members Alpert, Bartels, Case, DiFazio, DiTomasso, Eberwein, Emerson, Gelinas, Lacatell, Lattizzori, Lounsbury, Peters, Stuart, Tucker and Chair Craft-Reiss.
Nays: None.
Abstentions: None.
Motion carries unanimously.

c. Approval of Second Reading Revision of Policy 3410: Professional Staff Recruiting/Posting of Vacancies

MOVED BY MEMBER DIFAZIO, SECONDED BY MEMBER TUCKER

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee approves the second reading revision of Policy 3410: Professional Staff Recruiting/Posting, as amended by the Policy Subcommittee.

ROLL CALL

Ayes: Members Alpert, Bartels, Case, DiFazio, DiTomasso, Eberwein, Emerson, Gelinas, Lacatell, Lattizzori, Lounsbury, Peters, Stuart, Tucker and Chair Craft-Reiss.
Nays: None.
Abstentions: None.
Motion carries unanimously.

d. Approval of Second Reading Deletion of Policy 3445: Maternity Leave

MOVED BY MEMBER DIFAZIO, SECONDED BY MEMBER DITOMASSO

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee approves the second reading deletion of Policy 3445: Maternity Leave, as recommended by the Policy Subcommittee.

ROLL CALL

Ayes: Members Alpert, Bartels, Case, DiFazio, DiTomasso, Eberwein, Emerson, Gelinias, Lacatell, Lattizzori, Lounsbury, Peters, Stuart, Tucker and Chair Craft-Reiss.

Nays: None.

Abstentions: None.

Motion carries unanimously.

In response to a question from Member Stuart, Member DiFazio stated that Attorney Dupere did not need to attend a future policy meeting to discuss the November 16 minutes, as his earlier email regarding the topic shares his opinion. Chair Craft-Reiss stated that she would share Attorney Dupere's email with Member Stuart. Member Stuart also requested the subcommittee discuss Article 4, Section 2 of the district's by-laws with Attorney Dupere.

4. Personnel

a. Report

Member Lacatell reported the subcommittee met February 16 to review negotiations with CBEA teachers' units.

b. Executive Session - Negotiations

Not needed.

B. Others

1. Wahconah Building Project

a. Report

Member Peters reported the foundation of the old school will be removed tomorrow; the playing fields will be leveled after the frost.

In response to the lights being on all the time, Member Peters commented he will bring this to the project manager. Member Lattizzori commented that the pandemic mode uses a lot of electricity; Member Peters replied it is a learning curve.

2. Regional Agreement Ad Hoc

a. Report

Member DiTomasso reported the committee has not met.

Chair Craft-Reiss responded to Member Stuart about her voting on motions in the subcommittee meetings that she is an ex-officio member of all subcommittees. This will be discussed at another time.

ARTICLE 12379 SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Report

1. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Blake-Davis' report can be found attached to the official minutes.

B. Recommendations

C. Other

ARTICLE 12380 PERSONNEL

Superintendent's Review of Personnel Changes

None.

Note: All salaries are set in accordance with current contracts.

ARTICLE 12381 OLD BUSINESS (Unfinished Business)

(Any business not completed or postponed from a previous meeting, or not covered if a meeting had to be adjourned for any reason prior to concluding entire agenda)

ARTICLE 12382 NEW BUSINESS (Emergency Business)

(Unforeseen business developed subsequent to posting of meeting and requiring timely attention. Member requests to place items on a future agenda [without deliberation of the substance of such items])

ARTICLE 12383 REMARKS FOR THE GOOD OF THE COMMITTEE

Member Stuart requested two items be put on the next agenda: the solicitation of input from the community for the School Committee and dissemination of information to the community.

MOVED BY MEMBER DITOMASSO, SECONDED BY MEMBER ALPERT

To adjourn the meeting at 9:01 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Ayes: Members Alpert, Bartels, Case, DiFazio, DiTomasso, Eberwein, Emerson, Gelinas, Lacatell, Lattizzori, Lounsbury, Peters, Stuart, Tucker and Chair Craft-Reiss.
Nays: None.
Abstentions: None.
Motion carries unanimously.

The following were given as handouts or used during the meeting & are filed with the official minutes

FY23 Tentative Budget Presentation

The following documents were emailed to members and are filed with the official minutes

FY23 Tentative Budget
Policy 3400: Professional Staff Hiring
Policy 3410: Professional Staff Recruiting/Posting of Vacancies
Policy 3445: Maternity Leave
Superintendent's Report