

**Virtual Special Meeting Minutes of the  
Plainville Board of Education**

**Special Meeting Title:** Discussion and input with local medical advisors and experts concerning various COVID testing choices and/or other alternatives

**Date:** Monday, January 11, 2021

**Time:** 6:00 p.m.

**Place:** Virtual Meeting

**Attendees:** Becky Tyrrell, Chair; Crystal St. Lawrence, Vice Chair; Becky Martinez; Deb Hardy; Foster White; Brent Davenport; Nicole Palmieri; and Kathy Wells  
Steven LePage, Superintendent of Schools  
Julie Simard, RN, District's COVID Compliance Liaison  
Stacy Buden, District HR Director

**Also Present:** Griffin Hospital  
Richard Daigle, Chief Information Officer/Information Services  
Patrick Charmel, President & CEO

**Not in Attendance:** Board Member Laurie Peterson

**Early Departures:** None

The Special meeting of the Plainville Board of Education was called to order by Chairwoman Becky Tyrrell at 6:03 PM.

Mr. LePage stated that the purpose of this meeting is to discuss options/alternatives with local medical advisors and experts concerning various testing choices with regard to Asymptomatic COVID results. He has called upon Dr. Kei, the Town's consulting physician, who is affiliated with the Doctor's Treatment Center in Plainville, Shane Lockwood, Director of Health for Plainville and surrounding communities, and Rick Daigle and Patrick Charmel of Griffin Hospital. Mr. LePage stated that Dr. Kei could not attend this evening's meeting and was not in favor of Asymptomatic testing, nor is Mr. Lockwood. Mr. Lockwood wrote a statement concerning the issue. Both gentlemen feel that there is little value in it and choose not to support it. Mr. LePage stated that this leaves him in a difficult position. In order to provide testing in all Plainville schools, he would need our consulting physician, Dr. Kei, and our local health director, Shane Lockwood to support, sign off, and be involved in making testing happen.

Mr. LePage stated that Dr. Kei has been wonderful in working with Mrs. Simard and Mrs. Buden in testing everyone who needs to be tested and who we refer to the Doctor's Treatment Center. He has not heard any complaints about the process, just that it is very quick and results come back fast, as they do at the drive-up PCR site at Tunxis. The district has been able to refer and get people tested within the hour and always within a day or so. With all of the cases seen between August and the present, there have only been 92 cases (68 students and 24 staff) out of a

population of over 1,700 students attending in person each day and over 400 staff members coming in over a 70-day period. Further, we have had only one or two cases that could have potentially come from a school contact, but there was also community contact, so it's hard to tell. Mr. LePage feels we are doing well and that our mitigating strategies and contact tracing have been effective.

Mr. LePage then called upon Julie Simard, the District's COVID Compliance Liaison, to communicate what is happening with regard to testing. Ms. Simard stated that the school nurses and Mrs. Buden have been very busy and are doing a great job with regard to contact tracing and have been keeping great records. Ms. Simard and school nurses are referring people to local community testing sites and/or calling their own doctor. She stated that Griffin Hospital's site gives 24-48 hour results and is free to the public, as are Community Health Centers in New Britain and Bristol. However, there is a charge at the Doctor's Treatment Center in Plainville. She then called upon Rick Daigle, Chief Information Officer and Patrick Charmel, President & CEO of Griffin Hospital for further discussion.

Mr. Daigle touched upon PCR testing and stringent guidelines for schools. First, DPH needs to be involved to certify the location. There needs to be an entrance and exit (one direction flow of traffic). There needs to be five air exchanges in a one-hour period. Billing of insurance can become a major problem depending on how many students/staff there are (adding commercial insurances causes more complexities as not all fees are covered).

In order to hold a Pop-Up testing site (which is State sponsored), the district would need to contact the State directly. Another consideration is that students 18 years old or younger need consent from a parent in order to be tested. The State, and/or legal counsel, would have to let the district know if a signed consent form is enough or whether an adult/parent need to accompany the child. Another consideration to think about is that Pop-Up's will draw approximately 200-800 cars in a six-hour window. Location is also a big part of the process.

Ms. Martinez stated that most testing sites close before most people get out of work which is a problem for many parents and teachers. She then asked if Griffin Hospital would consider hosting a Pop-Up session in Plainville. Mr. Charmel stated that this would have to be State approved. He referred Mr. LePage to Michelle Gilman in the Governor's Office. Ms. Gilman would make the decision as to whether the state would sponsor the session and if they would take care of the expenses. He also stated that decisions are ultimately made by reviewing the regional area being served. If the state feels the Plainville area is being well served with enough testing sites, the request could be denied.

Mr. Charmel also mentioned the possibility of a Town screening program, but did say it includes a hefty price tag. Ms. Martinez questioned the use of federal funding allocated for testing in the grant announcement. Mr. Charmel explained that those funds are to continue existing testing, nursing homes, etc. and wasn't sure that municipalities could gain access to the funding.

Ms. Martinez said she still has concerns regarding asymptomatic students and the lack of available PCR testing sites. She stated that when a person is asymptomatic there is no definitive way to know who gave it to who. For instance, if a parent tests positive for COVID then has their family tested and finds out their child is positive and asymptomatic. The child did not become COVID positive the minute they tested positive, but rather when they caught the virus. The higher the number of cases in the community, the higher the chances of it coming into the schools. In addition, there has been very few convenient, free, available asymptomatic testing sites in Plainville. Most close before people get out of work. Ms. Martinez also expressed her



belief that based on the color-coded chart in State Addendum 4, Plainville Community Schools is not following DPH or CDC guidelines due to our case numbers. Mr. LePage explained that Dr. Matt Carter, State Epidemiologist, has clarified that this Addendum and case chart was created before knowing school impact, but that cases in schools and school transmission has been very low in most cases, so the chart is just one guide.


Mr. Daigle mentioned that Phase 1B administering vaccines will include individuals 75 years of age+ and teachers and school staff. The phase begins on Monday. Superintendents will receive a list guiding essential workers.

A parent had also posed a question and suggestion about sharing with families just what testing is like and what to expect, along with costs and locations, so people are less fearful of going for a test. Mrs. Tyrrell agreed this would be helpful and Mrs. Simard agreed that this could be created and shared with the district.

Mr. LePage concluded the meeting by stating that the district is strictly following all State and Local guidelines. He has another meeting with State and local officials tomorrow morning and will keep everyone posted. He thanked Mr. Daigle and Mr. Charnel for attending this evening's meeting and will keep them posted pending further discussion with the Board.

The meeting will reconvene at the Board of Education's Regular Business meeting at 7 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Joan Calistro  
Recorder of Minutes