

**Minutes for Special Called Meeting  
Pope County CUSD #1  
Board of Education  
J. H. Hobbs Memorial Library  
August 9, 2021, 7:00 p.m.**

**Meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by President Hogg and the following members were present in person: Walker, Aly, Schuchardt, Wallace, Simmons, and Hogg, via Zoom: Kizziar. President Hogg welcomed everyone to the meeting.**

**Motion was made by Schuchardt and seconded by Walker to approve the agenda. Roll call vote: all ayes.**

**Mr. Fritch stated the revised 2021-2022 SY Return to School Plan was distributed to all board members before the meeting. As of two weeks ago, school districts across the state had the choice to make masks optional and this board approved that option with keeping all the other mitigation guidelines as last year. Since then, the Governor has mandated masks be worn in all public K-12 schools. He stated his recommendation to the board was to approve the revised Return to School Plan requiring masks be worn. He explained that as a superintendent, it is his responsibility to put his own personal beliefs and feelings aside to make the best decision for the students of Pope County Schools. He further explained his reasoning behind his recommendation that masks should be worn by all students, teachers, and staff. We are currently in**

the orange warning level with 13 positive case in the county, if masks are worn properly students won't have to quarantine if exposed, and we can get students back in the classroom. Remote Learning was not an effective avenue of learning for most of our students, too many are failing or way behind. He went on to explain the liability of ignoring the mandate; which could potentially mean loss of state and federal funding, school recognition, and grant funding. The legal liability alone could potentially cost the district millions of dollars in lawsuits, in turn costing the tax payers millions of dollars for several years to come. He added that this isn't the way we saw school starting this year but it is what it is and we have to make the best decision for our students, teachers, and staff. Mr. Fritch recognized all seven members of the board and thanked them for their time and service and realizes this is an unfair task put before them.

At this time, President Hogg opened the floor to public comment. Several parents voiced their concerns with mandated mask wearing or not wearing masks at all, remote learning concerns or wanting other remote learning options, and options of parental waivers. Many questions were asked regarding the liability on the district if a case was to spread in a classroom or in the school. A couple of the teachers also voiced their views from the teacher's stand point on mask wearing, remote learning, and how important it is to get the students back in the classrooms.

President Hogg asked if any board member had any comments or thoughts on the board needing to speak with an attorney before moving forward. Member Kizziar asked regarding the numbers from Southern Seven Health Department and how they arrive at those numbers and warning levels. Mr. Fritch also added that the mandate is for 30 days and then the Governor will have to issue another mandate. We will stay informed on the mandates and numbers in the following days and weeks ahead. When there is a change, we will revise our plan.

Wallace made a motion to adopt the new Return to School Plan for the 2021-2022 SY as presented seconded by Simmons. Roll call vote: Kizziar, Aly, Schuchardt, Wallace, Simmons; ayes, Walker and Hogg; nay. Motion carried. Before member Schuchardt voted during roll call, he explained his decision and reasoning for his vote, adding that he wants to provide an education to all students that we can all be proud of.

With no further business to be discussed, a motion was made by Wallace and seconded by Simmons to adjourn the meeting until the next regular meeting to be held on Thursday, August 19, 2021 at 7:00 pm in the J.H. Hobbs Memorial Library. All members present voted aye.

Meeting adjourned at 8:21 pm.

---

Jeremy Hogg, President

---

Paula Baker, Secretary

**Board of Education**

**Board of Education**