

HADLEY- LUZERNE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING  
February 3, 2021



STUART M. TOWNSEND ES LGI 6:30 pm

MINUTES

Meeting Place: Stuart M. Townsend Elementary School, LGI  
Members Present: Mr. Moulton, Mrs. Hoffman, Mr. Novotarski, Mrs. Visscher  
Members Absent: Mrs. Braico  
Others in Attendance: Superintendent – Beecher Baker, Jr./Sr. HS Principal-Burgess Ovitt, and 4 others.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by President Moulton.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF WINTER HIGH RISK SPORTS FOR 2020-2021

Motion by Mrs. Hoffman

Resolution #124

WHEREAS, on January 22, 2021, the Governor and the New York State Health Department authorized schools to operate certain higher-risk winter sports effective February 1, 2021 as may be permitted and authorized by local county health departments; and,

WHEREAS, the New York State Department of Health subsequently issued updated guidelines for the operation of Sports and Recreation related to higher-risk winter sports; and,

WHEREAS, New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA) and Section 2 have issued revised guidelines for Return to Interscholastic Athletics for the 2020-21 season: and,

WHEREAS, pending the Warren County Public Health Director and School Physician's approval for schools within Warren County to operate winter high risk sports should schools wish to participate in one or more Winter High Risk Sports; and,

WHEREAS, the Superintendent of Schools has shared with the Board the plan to provide Winter High Risk Sports in accordance with all applicable New York State Department of Health, County Department of Health, and any applicable league health and safety requirements which will be implemented during all practices and games.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education of the Hadley-Luzerne Central School District hereby approves the following:

A. Implementing the following interscholastic sports for the 2021 winter season:

- Varsity Girls Basketball
- Junior Varsity Girls Basketball
- Modified Girls Basketball
- Varsity Boys Basketball
- Junior Varsity Boys Basketball
- Modified Boys Basketball
- Varsity Wrestling
- Junior Varsity Wrestling
- Modified Wrestling

Fall 2

Varsity Girls Volleyball  
Junior Varsity Girls Volleyball  
Modified Girls Volleyball  
Varsity Boys Football  
Junior Varsity Boys Football  
Modified Boys Football

B. This approval is under the following conditions:

- Each parent/guardian must sign a district/school developed COVID-19 informed consent for participation form that is issued by the District;
- The district has a plan approved by Warren County Public Health that contains the health and safety protocols that are in place to allow this to occur and the plan is approved by the HLCS Physician;
- If at any time the high school hybrid learning model moves to remote only learning, there will not be any athletics or extra-curricular in person activities during this time of any period of remote only instruction;
- All practices and contests will occur in accordance with all guidelines issued by NYS, the County, and NYSPHSAA/Section/League as such guidelines may be amended at any time.

C. The Board delegates to and authorizes the Superintendent to take any action he deems necessary and appropriate to ensure that such sports are implemented in a safe manner consistent with all guidelines (NYS, County, and Section). This includes the authority to temporarily suspend District participation in any of the above sports, if the Superintendent deems such action necessary.

Seconded by Mr. Novotarski followed by a \*discussion.

ROLL CALL

Yes: 4            No: 0            Abstain: 0

Motion carried

\*ADMINISTRATIVE/BOARD DISCUSSION ON THE RESOLUTION:

Superintendent Baker gave an overview of the reason for this process. The Governor gave the OK to move ahead with high risk school athletics and deferred the final decision to the county department of health's to give the metrics and guidelines that we have to follow. This is a point of contention as the bar tends to change. As the Warren County 'High Risk' Sports Guidelines state: *"The 7-day rolling average percent positivity in the region and/or county, as calculated by NYSDOH, must be at or below 4.0%."* Today the average is 3.4% currently in the county but the region is 4.7% currently. There was discussion on the definitions and which area would determine the status of athletics. Either way there could be lots of stopping and starting of the sports. Superintendent Baker noted that he doesn't want the process messing with kids heads. They need it mentally and physically. Our job is to say yes and when the metrics work out, we resume. The next step after this approval is for the HL School Physician, Dr. Flatau, to approve and she may refer to Dr. Borgos who will have to sign off and say yes. We are in good shape; he has always supported that athletics resume, even in the Fall.

Mrs. Hoffman asked if we can move to another school physician if we do not get the approval. The response was- that would be questionable, yet just one approval is needed.

Mrs. Visscher questioned the process; what happens if another school district is not under the 4% threshold. Then that competition would not happen and it will not be rescheduled. It was noted we will not be participating outside of Warren County. The DOH does not recommend that we travel outside the county. There was discussion on making the guidelines flexible for kids.

Mrs. Hoffman stated that we need to make this happen for our kids at all levels.

Superintendent Baker informed everyone that most schools are leaving out the lower levels of modified and junior varsity. Even if we approve all levels we may have no-one to compete against. It was noted that one positive case could shut down a team.

Mr. Wilson stated that some of the AD's have been in meetings with DOH and they said unless we stay in the county they will not approve.

Mrs. Hoffman asked if another county could come here if we stay in the county. Mr. Wilson answered that the county wants there to be pods (bubbles) of competition only within the county.

There was discussion if the county was limiting the size of teams-no that is a school decision.

There was a question if surveys among students had taken place to determine if there would be enough athletes participating. This was directed to Basketball Coach Strong who stated that there may be families who may choose not to participate but believes we will have enough team members.

Superintendent Baker noted that individuals can go other places on their own, such as club sports but unfortunately this is creating a bigger gap between the haves and have-nots.

At this point we as a school board have to agree to participate. The Superintendent noted that he has a great relationship with the DOH. The two ladies he deals with don't make all the decisions. They of course are concerned with all the ongoing contact tracing.

Mrs. Visscher stating that educating students is our first priority.

It was expressed by a parent that kids don't have anything to work toward and it is affecting their education.

There was a discussion regarding a wave of Covid coming but it was noted that club sports have been going on already and students have already been participating. It was noted it is a family decision and each family have that choice. There was a discussion regarding wrestling with Mrs. Hoffman. She noted how much easier the individual sport is to contact trace compared to team sports. She discussed the option of removing C. of the resolution so that no one can stop a specific sport. After much discussion the board decided to keep the resolution as is.

At this point the resolution was voted on and passed.

The discussion continued with Mr. Wilson saying that tomorrow we will have the ability to play within the county and that the AD's and DOH are meeting.

#### PUBLIC/STUDENT COMMENTS

Mr. Strong (Teacher, Coach): Thanked the board and Mr. Baker for their support.

Mary Alice Barnaby (Aide, Parent): Asked if we have to write the plan up? That is in process now.

Justin Hoffman (Student): Thanked everyone for approving sports.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mrs. Hoffman to adjourn the meeting at 7:08 PM.

Seconded by Mrs. Visscher.

Yes: 4

No: 0

Abstain: 0

Motion Carried

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*Respectfully Submitted by Regina York – District Clerk*