

**Minutes of the NORTH ROYALTON BOARD OF EDUCATION Regular Meeting/Work Session
Held August 6, 2020
North Royalton High School Performing Arts Center**

SUMMARY

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- III. ROLL CALL
- IV. RESOLUTION 2020-201: FINALIZATION OF AGENDA
RESOLUTION 2020-202: MOTION TO ADD SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS BEFORE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
- V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
- VI. REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
- VII. ADDITIONAL BUSINESS
- VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS
- IX. RESOLUTION 2020-203: EXECUTIVE SESSION
- X. RESOLUTION 2020-204: MOTION TO ADJOURN

I. CALL TO ORDER. President Dr. John Kelly called the regular meeting of the North Royalton Board of Education to order at 6:30 p.m. on August 6, 2020.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE. President Dr. John Kelly requested all present to join in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

III. ROLL CALL. Present: President Dr. John Kelly, Vice President Heidi Dolezal, Jacquelyn Arendt, Terry DeLap and Anne Reinkober. Also present were Superintendent Gregory Gurka, Treasurer Biagio Sidoti, Assistant Superintendent James Presot, and Director of Technology Tricia Pozsgai.

Board President Dr. John Kelly read a statement asking the audience to keep masks on throughout the entire meeting. Public speakers can remove their masks only when they are speaking. The microphone will be wiped down between speakers.

IV. RESOLUTION 2020-201: FINALIZATION OF AGENDA. Resolve the Board of Education approve the agenda as presented.

Moved by DeLap

Seconded by Arendt

RESOLUTION 2020-202: Heidi Dolezal made a motion to amend the agenda to allow the superintendent to read a statement prior to Public Participation.

Moved by Dolezal

Seconded by Reinkober

Voting Aye: Dolezal, Reinkober, Arendt, DeLap, Kelly
Motion Carried

Vote for the original motion for Finalization of Agenda
Voting Aye: DeLap, Arendt, Dolezal, Reinkober, Kelly
Motion Carried

Superintendent Greg Gurka read the following statement:

Wednesday evening, August 5, I sent an email to our community with information on our reopening plans that align with the guidance and recommendations of the Cuyahoga County Board of Health (CCBOH). These recommendations included starting schools remotely and canceling all activities and athletics for the beginning of the school year. These are difficult decisions and ones that are not taken lightly. As has been the case with this pandemic since March, things continuously change. Yesterday, we received from CCBOH a review of their recommendations. They are still strongly recommending that all schools in Cuyahoga County begin school remotely as is our plan. However, they state that there are times when students need some in-person contact in order to deliver services for students with special needs, extracurriculars, and other services. This guidance also states that these services and extracurriculars need to be done in groups of less than 10, including the teacher, advisor, or coach.

Based on this new information, we will allow our extracurricular activities to continue as we lead up to the school year starting for students on September 1. For athletics, we will return to a modified phase of our plan where no more than nine students and a coach can work together at any one time. We will also allow equipment related to that sport to be part of this phase. For the band, choir, and other extracurriculars, we will allow groups of no more than nine students and a director or advisor to be together at any one time. Our athletic director and our directors and advisors will be communicating the specific details to parents and students in the next few days.

Our reopening plans are designed with the flexibility to allow us to move from remote to in-person learning and then, if needed, back again, without much disruption. Part of the plan is to have our students be able to participate in activities that allow them to be engaged as much as possible with teachers and with classmates. We must do this in a safe manner, and we will follow the guidelines set forth by the Cuyahoga County Board of Health.

Things continue to change and we receive new information and guidance often. With our first day of school for students beginning September 1, there is always the possibility that changes will occur. I will continue to keep our community informed if anything changes.

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION. The public is invited to speak to any of the agenda items and other school topics at this time. The following speakers addressed the Board:

The following abbreviations are used throughout the public participation portion of the minutes:

NRCSD: North Royalton City School District

NRHS: North Royalton High School

CCBOH: Cuyahoga County Board of Health

CDC: Center for Disease Control and Prevention

OHSAA: Ohio High School Athletic Association

Diane Linne, of 8023 Edgerton Road, North Royalton, is a parent of a senior and spoke in support of students going back to school. She asked the Board to look at sources other than the Cuyahoga County Board of Health (CCBOH) and listed statistics that supported her position of wanting in-person school.

Matthew VanSteenlandt, of 7550 James Drive, North Royalton, is a senior at North Royalton High School. He spoke of the emotional state of athletes and asked for more understanding of this when making reopening decisions. He requested that the Board reconsider their decision.

Emily Michalak, of 3204 Thorn Tree Drive, North Royalton, is a senior at North Royalton High School. Emily stated her belief that students should go back to school. She discussed senior year, recruitment opportunities, sports and activities, and the mental health of students.

Christine Koprowski, of 11381 Villa Grande Drive, North Royalton, is a parent of a freshman and a junior. Christine wants parents to have the choice of sending their children to school or attending remotely. She spoke of the mental well-being of students, sports and activities, and remote learning.

John Paul (J.P.) Michalak, of 3204 Thorn Tree Drive, North Royalton, is a parent of a sophomore and a senior. He would like the Board to allow parents to determine the risk to their children going back to school. He asked the Board to review the results of the parent survey.

Karen Kolar, of 4411 Sir John Avenue, North Royalton, is a parent of a junior and three North Royalton graduates. She is a nurse and has autoimmune disease in her family, but still supports in-person school. Karen discussed mental health, extracurricular activities, EdChoice, and students falling behind.

Dr. Kathleen Payne, of 9749 Silverleaf Drive, North Royalton, is a parent of a junior and a recent graduate. She is the North Royalton Band Booster President, a clinical child psychologist, and owns a practice in North Royalton. She discussed her concerns with the social-emotional needs of students and recommendations from agencies that support students going back to school.

Dan Langshaw, of 5970 Wallings Road, North Royalton, is a former board member and city council member, a PTA member, and a parent of two, including an eighth grader at North Royalton Middle School. Dan requested that the Board and superintendent be flexible in their response to COVID-19 as it relates to school, activities and sports.

Henry Schuld, of 5970 Wallings Road, North Royalton, is an eighth-grade student. He discussed athletics and how not having the opportunity to play affects students.

Lisa Shuck, of 7485 Cady Road, North Royalton, is a parent of a senior and a freshman. Lisa works in the ICU at the Cleveland Clinic and listed COVID-19 related statistics from the ICU. She discussed how not being in school negatively affects students and parents. She talked about how summer athletics took place safely. She urged the Board to reconsider their decision.

Jen Baracz, of 11764 Ivy Ridge Drive, North Royalton, is a parent of an eighth grader and a senior, and Julianna Kachmarik of 11739 Ivy Ridge Drive, North Royalton, is a parent of a junior. They are in support of students returning to school and are concerned with the mental health of students.

Scott Kucharski, of 321 Windham Court, Broadview Heights, is a parent of a senior and a North Royalton graduate. He stated that sports have been following guidelines from the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) since the beginning of summer and asked the Board to follow the OHSAA guidelines instead of the CCBOH. He asked the Board to work with neighboring districts so that all are in agreement.

Gina Mitchner, of 505 Wilmington Drive, Broadview Heights, is a parent of a sophomore and a senior. She discussed the importance of a normal, in-school schedule for her child with special needs. She also discussed sports, remote learning, grades, and support for students to return to school.

Jeremiah Sawyer is a parent of a seventh grader and a sophomore. He asked the Board to change its decision and give the choice back to the parents.

Jenn Vranic, of 20873 Evergreen Trail, North Royalton, is the parent of an eighth grader and a sophomore. She discussed the importance of athletics and stated that she is not in agreement with remote learning. She asked the Board to allow parents to have a choice.

Andrea Ciulli, is a parent of a junior. She works for the Cleveland Clinic and discussed COVID-19 statistics of their employees and her belief that students can return to school safely. She expressed her support of in-person school for students and asked the Board to give the choice back to parents.

Melissa Crowe, of 1500 Parkview Lane, Broadview Heights, is a parent of a sixth grader, an eighth grader, and a sophomore. She inquired as to why our District did not create a unified plan with Brecksville-Broadview Heights

Schools as both systems have students who live in North Royalton and Broadview Heights. She asked the Board to once again return the option of in-person school or remote learning to parents.

Kim Ponting, of 1136 Fireside Trail, Broadview Heights, is a parent of a second grader and a fourth grader. She discussed elementary school children and the importance of being taught by their teachers in person, not by their parents at home.

Jennifer Scocos, of 4981 Brookhaven Drive, North Royalton, is the parent of a sophomore. She stated her belief that the Board should not be following the CCBOH. She is a microbiologist and expressed her feeling that the Board should take the advice of experts in the community, many of whom have medical backgrounds.

Terrence (T.R.) Kane, of 20704 Evergreen Trail, North Royalton, is a parent of a sophomore and a senior. He discussed his high school coaching experience and how sports relate to the mental health of students. He expressed his belief that the Board should listen to the community members who spoke this evening, many of whom are in the medical field.

Denise Pacholski, of 1421 Hamilton Drive, Broadview Heights, is a parent of a sophomore and two North Royalton graduates. She is a nurse practitioner. She believes that there is a way to open school safely and expressed support for face-to-face instruction, or a hybrid model of combined in-school and remote learning. She asked the Board to reconsider its decision and return the choice to parents.

Jennifer Krivonak, of 10275 S. Red Oak, North Royalton, is a parent of a kindergartener, preschooler, and a second grader. She discussed the fact that St. Albert the Great Elementary School in North Royalton is returning to in-person school, while we are not. She asked the Board not to take the choice away from parents.

Wendy McDonnell, of 6630 Queens Way, North Royalton, is a parent of a junior. She discussed the mental health of students who do not have sports and in-person education. She asked the Board to develop a plan that doesn't take these opportunities away from the students.

Eric VanSteenlandt, of 7550 James Drive, North Royalton, is a parent of a senior. He discussed sports. He believes that parents should have the choice of in-school or remote learning, and also suggested working with other districts such as Brecksville-Broadview Heights schools.

Marissa Hickey, of 5330 Waterbridge Drive, North Royalton, is a sophomore at North Royalton High School. She discussed remote learning this past spring and her desire to have in-person school this year. She also talked about her disappointment in sports being canceled and how it directly affects the mental health of students.

Mary Jo Cooper, of 11421 Villa Grande Drive, North Royalton, is a parent of a sophomore and a senior. She spoke from her experience as a librarian for a school district in Cuyahoga County. She gave examples of activities that took place safely during the summer, such as band and travel sports. She discussed remote learning from last year and asked the Board to reconsider its decision and return the choice of in-school or remote learning to parents.

Jeanne Radwanski, of 4410 Sir John Avenue, North Royalton, is a parent of a senior who is involved in sports. She discussed the mental and social-emotional well-being of students related to remote learning.

Adam Swab, of 4901 Vale Drive, North Royalton is a senior at North Royalton High School. He is a member of the band and involved in almost every activity at the high school. He discussed remote learning from last year and his wish to return to school in person this year, as well as back to activities and band. He spoke of reallocating funds from athletics towards mental health if school should start remotely. He asked the Board to reconsider its decision and allow families to have the choice of in-person or remote learning.

Denise Polverine, of 11995 Firefly Drive, North Royalton, is a parent of a sophomore. She is the Director of Visual Content at WKYC. She has experience working with Boys and Girls Clubs, the United Way, and the Press Club of Cleveland. She also teaches at Case Western Reserve University, and has participated in Leadership Cleveland. She discussed her experiences in these roles as they relate to making decisions, leadership and empathy. She asked the Board to reconsider its decision and give parents a choice for in-person or remote learning.

Zoom Request: Patrick Magee, of 454 Wilmington Drive, Broadview Heights, is a parent of a third grader and a fifth grader. The following statement was read on behalf of Mr. Magee: "Please explain the due process given to students and parents to defend our right to receive an in-person education. We all seem to have the same common interests for our kids. Let's find some solutions to get back to school which is essential."

Zoom Request: Raluca Pascu, of 8920 Tiffany Drive, North Royalton, is the parent of a third grader and a seventh grader. The following statement was read on behalf of Ms. Pascu: "Can we please look at what Sweden and Finland did? Closing of schools has no measurable effect on the number of cases of COVID-19 among children. Children are not a major risk group of the COVID-19 disease and seem to play a less important role from the transmission point of view although more active surveillance and special studies such as school and household transmission studies are warranted. The negative effects of closing schools must be weighed against the possible positive indirect effects it might have on the mitigation of the COVID-19 pandemic. Please ask the Board to consider the data from Sweden." Ms. Pascu shared some [data](#) with the Board Ms. Raluca then spoke about these opinions.

Zoom Request: Chris May, of 4605 Jessica Lane, North Royalton, is a parent of a junior. Chris spoke of her experience with a person who had COVID-19 and what a stressful situation it was for the whole family. She urged people to act responsibly so that students can return to school.

Gregory Hickey, D.O., of 5330 Waterbridge Drive, North Royalton, spoke of his work as a doctor, ICU Director, and head of COVID admissions at Southwest General Hospital. He also works with the ICU department at Parma Hospital. He shared data from these hospitals. He asked the Board to look at data from sources other than the CCBOH, and stated that going back to school can be done safely using safety precautions.

Dawn Carbone-McDonald is a community member who stated her belief that students and families should have the choice to return to school.

Carla Humble is a parent of two graduates and a tenth grader. She asked the Board to reconsider its decision and go back to the original plan of giving parents a choice regarding in-school or remote learning.

Zoom Request: Nelly Kelley, of 433 Wilmington Drive, Broadview Heights, is a parent of a fourth grader, a freshman and a senior. She expressed her frustrations with how online school went for her children last year. She stated her belief that the original reopening plan provided the safety needed to go back to school. She urged the Board to reconsider its decision.

Zoom Request: Mary Kay Deal, of 266 Stratford Drive, Broadview Heights, is a parent of a third grader and a sixth grader. Her daughter Maggie spoke about her sister who has Down syndrome and how difficult online school was for her. She asked the Board to reconsider its decision. Mary Kay also expressed similar views.

VI. REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

a. Superintendent's Update:

Mr. Gurka re-read the statement that was read at the beginning of the meeting for people on Zoom who may have missed it.

Superintendent Update: Mr. Gurka thanked everyone for attending the meeting and expressed his appreciation for parents, students, and community members giving their opinions on the reopening school plans. He stated that he has three daughters that graduated from North Royalton, all of them heavily involved in sports and activities. He understands the weight of these decisions and how they affect parents and kids. He stated that our plan is designed to change when conditions or recommendations change.

Mr. Gurka gave a summary of the timeline of the District plan, communications, and changes:

July 15: An email was sent to the community outlining the District's initial reopening plan. It contained our plans for delivering remote, blended, and in-person instructions at all levels. In that email correspondence, it was stated that due to the ever-changing nature of COVID-19, what is put out today may look different in 30 days, when it comes time to start school.

July 18: The reopening plan document was changed in how we had planned to deliver high school learning. A few days later, there was another change in regards to face shields. This situation changes rapidly and that is why our governor asked us to be flexible. Since March, we have been working with the CCBOH as the governor and the state have advised us to do.

July 30: Additional guidance was received from the Cuyahoga County Board of Health with strong recommendations that all schools in Cuyahoga County begin school remotely and cancel all extra-curricular activities and athletics. Upon receipt of that direction, the community was informed that all activities/athletics were on hold and that we would be spending time examining our plans.

July 31: There was a meeting with the Cuyahoga County Board of Health and they reaffirmed their recommendation about remote learning.

August 3: We had a phone conversation with the CCBOH and specifically asked the question about remote learning and were told, "Yes, we strongly recommend that districts do remote learning and cancel activities at this time." Our entire administrative team met for two days to discuss our current plan, the CCBOH recommendations, and how our plans should change.

August 5: Based on those discussions with the entire administrative team and with the new recommendations of the CCBOH, an email correspondence was sent out that North Royalton City Schools will begin school remotely and all activities and athletics are postponed until further notice.

While our plan is altered, parents still have a choice. That choice has not been taken away. When Cuyahoga County is in the Orange or Yellow designations, parents still need to decide if their child will go to school or remain in remote learning.

When we are in remote learning, our staffing will look different. There are positions that we may need to restructure, or we may need to do a reduction in force while we are in remote learning.

Our goal as administrators, teachers, and staff, is to get students in the buildings. Teachers and staff want to come to work. However, my duty as superintendent is to do so in the safest possible manner for the 4,000 students and over 500 staff members.

Terry DeLap inquired about the athletics. If we are allowed to practice, are we still allowed to compete with the other schools? Mr. Gurka stated that our stance has been since last March, that if we are in school, hybrid, or full time, we will have full athletics. When we are in remote learning, all athletics and extracurriculars will be canceled. This was based on the fact that when we are in elevated levels, we should limit contact. Based on

guidelines from the CCBOH today, we are allowing athletics and extracurricular activities to participate in small groups so that we are prepared when the time comes to move to full practices and competitions.

Mr. DeLap also asked if athletes are required to have a COVID-19 test 72 hours prior to competing. Mr. Gurka explained that the Lieutenant Governor stated that high school athletes did not need to follow this guidance.

Presentations:

Director of Curriculum and Instruction Melissa Vojta, along with Superintendent Gurka, gave a presentation on the Remote Learning plan, which will be posted to our website. The basic structures stay in place from our original plan. The change is that if we are in Purple or Red county designation, school will be in remote. If we are in Orange county designation is blended learning, and Yellow county designation we are all in school. Different from our previous plan is the parent choice of option 2, full remote learning all the time, consisting of a separate program through the Ohio Online Learning Program. With the updated plan, students, regardless of your intent to return if we do get back to face-to-face, will get a schedule and be assigned classes with North Royalton teachers. When we transition to our blended learning, parents who do not wish for their children to return will still have the ability to keep a North Royalton schedule taught by a North Royalton teacher.

Dr. Kelly asked questions about the new plan:

Do we have families that may need assistance with wifi? He informed Mrs. Vojta and Mr. Gurka that he learned that Verizon can provide the District with hotspots for people with connectivity issues free of charge.

Have we received a report on how the alphabetical breakdown (ex. A-L and M-Z) would work in a hybrid situation? Are they able to make the bus routes as efficient as possible or do we need to consider a change? Mr. Presot stated that we would be able to reroute our buses in a hybrid mode and would be able to seat most students one per seat, with family members sitting together. There may be a few exceptions of two to a seat.

Do we need to make changes in the allocation of funds to make sure everything is set up for the start of school? Mr. Sidoti explained that the administration has met and developed the budget, which will be up for approval on next month's agenda and up for change as needed.

Mr. Gurka closed the remote plan presentation by stating that we are trying to remain as flexible as possible to meet the needs of students while learning remotely and we will make adjustments as needed. He discussed the importance of teachers building relationships with students during this remote time. He reiterated that we are trying to do our best while following the guidelines presented to us. He reminded everyone that all of our administrators care and are not giving up. He discussed some of the things that have been done amidst the pandemic, for example, the high school principal holding 360 plus individual commencements to make it special for students and parents since we couldn't hold the commencement that was originally planned.

Mrs. Arendt asked about gifted/AP courses. Mr. Gurka explained that with our revised plan, we will be able to offer these classes to students, even if they choose to remain remotely.

She also asked if students that take chemistry and other hands-on courses could be brought back to school in small groups of students when school is in the remote phase. The answer was yes, and they are looking into this.

Construction Project Presentation: Mr. Presot gave a presentation using a picture slideshow to show the progress of our facilities.

Agenda Review:

Treasurer Biagio Sidoti reviewed the financial packet for the month ending July 31, 2020, the Suburban Health Consortium was posted, he went over the Moody's Service Investors report, and several items were recommended for approval.

b. Upcoming Agenda Review

The Board reviewed the August 10, 2020, regular meeting agenda and made changes where needed.

VII. ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

a. Policy Committee - Dr. Kelly read the following report:

On the August 10, 2020, the Board of Education agenda is a resolution to approve the policy updates related to NEOLA update Volume 38 Number 2 and Policy 8450.01. The Policy Committee met on Tuesday, July 28, 2020, at 3 p.m., to review and recommend the policies that were included in the Board packet you received last week. This round of updates contains policies which address a number of areas including, Protective Face Coverings During Pandemic/Epidemic Events, Graduation Requirements, Drug and Alcohol Testing of CDL License Holders, and the Employment of Professional, Classified, and Substitute Staff. Also included in this update is Policy 2266, which reflects the new Title IX regulations released by the Office for Civil Rights.

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Regular Meeting	August 10, 2020	7:00 p.m.	NRHS Performing Arts Center
Regular Meeting/Work Session	September 10, 2020	6:30 p.m.	Royal View Gymnasium
Regular Meeting	September 14, 2020	7:00 p.m.	Royal View Gymnasium

IX. **RESOLUTION 2020-203: EXECUTIVE SESSION.** Motion to go into executive session at 11:07 p.m. to consider the employment of a public employee or official and to discuss the evaluations of the superintendent and treasurer.

Moved by Arendt
Voting Aye: Arendt, Dolezal, DeLap, Reinkober Kelly

Seconded by Dolezal

Motion Carried

Called back to order at 11:49 p.m.

X. RESOLUTION 2020-204: MOTION TO ADJOURN

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:49 p.m.

Moved by DeLap

Seconded by Arendt

Voting Aye: DeLap, Arendt, Dolezal, Reinkober, Kelly

Motion Carried

Note: All North Royalton Board of Education meetings are recorded and posted on the District website: www.northroyaltonsd.org.

ATTEST:

Beagio Siskel
TREASURER

D. John H. Kelly
BOARD PRESIDENT

September 14, 2020
DATE

9/14/2020
DATE