



Lake Norman Charter Board Meeting  
July Reopening Opening Board Meeting Minutes

*July 21, 2020*

General Meeting

Attending: Shannon Stein-superintendent, Rick Buckler, Jennifer Johnson, Jared Tilley, Ridgley Chapman, Stephanie Painter, Ridgley Chapman, Leslie Fogarty, Amy Carr, Greg Kilpatrick, Elizabeth Timkovich

**Meeting called to order at 7:05 PM by Rick Buckler**

- I. **New Business:** We are here to talk openly about the school reopening plan and revisit the options after discussing the circumstances we have now. Two weeks ago we came together with the recommendation of Plan B. This was to be proactive if the governor went to A because operationally this would be best. Restrictions have changed and the governor offered B or C to schools, and given the data in Mecklenburg county, he kept us in Phase II. Our school will reevaluate what plan is best for our school. There are many factors to take into consideration including the data in Mecklenburg county so that we make the best possible decision for our school.
  - A. Safety protocol and reopening for Plan B: Included: Masks, social distancing, daily health screening, cleaning, student cohorts, additional staff for the cleaning.
  - B. Protocol that has changed: The governor kept us in Phase II, Health Human Services made changes to the Strong School Kit, NC was labeled as a Red Zone, the CDC delayed opening guidance until the end of July.
  - C. Other schools in the area: Most area schools changed to Plan C including CMS, Cabarrus Co., Pine Lake Prep, Community School of Davidson, and Lincoln Charter
  - D. Closing/Reopening Decision Matrix: Governor's recommendation, Meck Co COVID #, Under 18 COVID Pos Meck Co, # Regional Hospitalization, LNC Positive, LNC Exposed., Blue: State or region, Green: specific to LNC, Other factors: staff and parent feedback and decision aligning with goals. Currently on the matrix we are mostly in Plan B, but the COVID numbers are in Plan C.
    - i. Data sources: Mecklenburg Department of Health, if someone is tested, self reports, the school notified through a doctor, families reporting, LNC is required to report to them as well.
    - ii. What is the threshold of symptoms when kids report to school (i.e., difference between COVID and other illnesses): Currently, a person only needs one symptom: fever over 100.4, new cough, loss of taste, exposure. If someone answers yes to any of these questions they are required to quarantine.
    - iii. If a parent tests positive and the kid is asymptomatic, how are we tracking this? It is one of the attestation questions.
    - iv. If a student has to quarantine during Plan B, how will these kids continue education? Similar if a student got the flu. Students will receive the information. Teachers are also planning for both plans and will have resources available. This will be more challenging for teachers in Plan B if multiple students are out at a time because they are teaching 4 days out of the week.
    - v. Who will take responsibility for keeping track of when a child must quarantine, siblings

quarantining, when they can return, etc.? Mrs. Shipman is our District Health Care Coordinator and she will understand the support the families will need. She will be watching the data and be our liaison with the Mecklenburg Co Department of Health while maintaining the HIPPA laws. Joanna Shook will assist her as well.

- vi. Is there a plan in place if teachers begin to get sick? We have layered as many safety measures as possible to help protect them. They may be able to teach from home and have a sub in the classroom if they are feeling well enough. Most of our subs have indicated that they are willing to continue with this job if needed. We should have the staffing. If we see a cluster of cases in any of our buildings, we will have to reevaluate.
  - vii. The decision matrix will be shared and discussed, at a minimum, at every board meeting to help with any and all decision making.
- E. Additional Considerations: What plan will best support the students: academics, social emotional, leadership/service. 67% of the staff would like to open with Plan C. They have considerable concern about opening successfully and safely.
- i. With respect to academic progress, what would the staff's view be on the differences between Plan B and C? Feedback we are seeing, teachers feel Plan C is a stronger option for staff and students. There will be a very different learning environment from the spring. The teachers have been spending time this summer attending remote learning PD developed by LNC. They are much more prepared this year than they were last year. We have also made the system more consistent for all students. With Plan C there is still a way to have face to face with the Wednesday structure.
  - ii. Will there be more flexibility in the Elem School and Middle school with assignments since many younger students will have working parents, etc...? Yes, the teachers are being encouraged to be much more flexible with due dates and times to take into account the home/life situation. We also have measures in place for students who are not doing well, may be struggling, or are simply not working. Administration is discussing due dates and amount and depth of assignments to make sure everything is more manageable.
  - iii. One concern/challenge as we transitioned in the spring was that teachers were caregivers as well. How will the teachers be able to balance their commitment and their families? Plan B & C: School-aged kids will be taken care of. Plan B students can come each day and Wednesdays there will be childcare. Plan C will have childcare available as well.
  - iv. The Reopening Committee had people from all areas of the school. Has the task force's view changed? All of the staff are taking pause at where the data currently lies with the regional data and the inconsistency of being under Phase II and the limitations as well as being in the Red Zone. Many are concerned about the safety issue. The tipping point is really indicative of the data in this area and how it is getting worse in this area. The Taskforce was tasked with creating the Plans, not necessarily determining which is best, just creating them.
  - v. If we remain under Plan B, do we have plans in place if staff elects not to return? If there is a high percentage of staff not wanting to return under Plan B, are we prepared for that? If it is couple of teachers, we can plan for that, but if it is many, we will need to consider how to quickly adjust to ensure good teaching. There have been a few teachers who have already said they will retire or leave if they are told they have to return. We also have to consider the anxiety the teachers who do show up may be experiencing and how they are able to best teach the students.
  - vi. If we open on Plan C, what would we have to do differently for the kickoff to get the kids ready for the new school year? This will be challenging and is one of the concerns because they have not had the opportunity to build relationships. Many teachers already have a plan in place to develop relationships and community remotely. There

will still be an opportunity for small group tutoring on Wednesdays. There will have to be an intentional effort to inspire and build community. This will be a building expectation for interaction / synchronous vs. asynchronous teaching. Schoology is also being restructured to be the same for ALL teachers so the shifting will be fluid and the same with all teachers.

- vii. If we open on Plan C, is there a decision to be made about fall sports? Currently all athletic participation is delayed/suspended until September 1 and we are waiting for more guidance on this from the state. This may vary based on the sport (contact vs. low-contact sports). HS and MS may also be different.
- F. Family Considerations: 176 students signed up for independent learning (8%). We believe this number would be higher if there were not so many restrictions placed on this (honors level courses, athletics/club participation). We plan to periodically survey families and staff to inform decisions moving forward. Other considerations include considering the media and reputation risk if someone gets ill.
- G. Review of Plan B and C Options: Governor gave schools the option that you can do either based on local data. Plan B roster: On campus 2 days per week M/TR or T/Fri. The other two days you would be working remotely. Wednesdays would be for tutoring (virtual and in-person), planning, collaboration, parent meetings, etc. In Plan C: We learned a lot from the spring experience, so we have added morning breaks, assessment flexibility, understanding due dates/times, lunch hour and office hours. Wednesdays would still be used like Plan B as well. Plan C has been changed to be strong to meet the needs of the students and teachers.
  - i. What does the elementary school look like in Plan C? This will vary based on teacher and grade level, but there will be daily contact. All in-person meetings online will be recorded so students can watch them later, if needed, depending on family support/schedules. Teachers will have office hours as well.
  - ii. How will teachers find balance between technical fatigue and lessons? Teachers have been instructed on the brain science regarding the chunking of information with engaging activities interwoven into the lessons based on students development (i.e. younger students need shorter lessons, etc.). The programs we have invested in will help with this (EdPuzzle, PearDeck, Screencastomatic)
  - iii. How will we review the success of these lessons? How will we monitor these new expectations? There will be regular observations, professional development, and consistent expectations, etc. We have laid the foundation for the staff which is something we didn't have time for in the spring.
- H. How will we move forward with Plan B and Plan C? There are two new pieces of information we did not have two weeks ago: 1. Input from the staff and 2. Benchmark of what other schools were going to do. Additionally, Gov. Cooper kept the state in Phase II, limiting the number of people that can be together in groups, which was not expected when the original decision was made. These key pieces should inform the decisions. The most recent local COVID Meck data is going down a little, but there has not been substantial movement from two weeks ago but is still in the "substantial spread" 10% range.
  - i. **Rick Buckler's** perspective: He does not believe there has been drastic change in the safety aspect, but there has been for the teachers' vision. He would prefer to open with **Plan B**. He says we have the ability to change course if we need to.
  - ii. **Jared Tilley:** Teacher survey--2 out of every 3 teachers has a safety concern for their students and themselves for Plan B under current conditions. Votes for **Plan C**.
  - iii. **Elizabeth Timkovich:** The safest course is starting with plan C and moving to B as things improve. People are scared for kids and people in the immediate household. She recognizes this is a concern and feels **Plan C** would be best. If we were to poll the parents again now, things may be different. Family circumstances have been changing.
  - iv. **Jennifer Johnson:** How late can we wait to make a decision? Which is easier, plan for

B and move to C if needed? Executing the plans is very different under each plan. Balancing classes, families, independent learning, therefore it is important that we give time for the staff/admin, as well as families to prepare. We network with high performing charter schools in the state, but the ones in this area are: Lincoln Charter, CSD, PLP. These schools are opening remotely for safety and comfortable for teachers and families. Phase 2 is inconsistent with Plan B. Can we open the Elem under Plan B and MS and HS in Plan C. She would reevaluate after 4 weeks. Votes for **Plan C**.

- v. **Leslie Fogarty:** There are risks in bringing them back to school and keeping them home. Looking at the data from ten days ago and now, from a safety perspective, the protocols put in place are good and will help us protect our students. Not taking teacher concerns lightly, but **Plan B** is a solid option for us. We should do Plan B and evaluate after 4 weeks.
- vi. **Stephanie Painter:** Her position is that it was wise to step back and consider the factors. She is supportive of starting with a **Plan C**. We need another 4-6 weeks of time. This will provide consistency for the students and allow time to continue to look at data. Teacher feedback is key. They are concerned for themselves and their families and cannot give it their all under these conditions. More data in a few weeks will help us make better informed decisions. Wells Fargo is not even thinking about bringing back people to an office until September 7, so why are we taking more risks in the school.
- vii. **Greg Kilpatrick:** Supports **Plan C** for all the reasons Stephanie Painter stated above. He does not see the benefit in going directly to B if the educational opportunities will be about the same and teachers are more comfortable with C, this is the way we should move. Perception is important. If staff and families perceive there is a danger, we should provide the most safety and security as possible.
- viii. **Ridgley Chapman:** She agrees that numbers show nothing drastic has changed, but people are scared and dealing with this emotionally. She empathizes with the teachers. She is concerned for her kids and recognizes student concerns and feelings. She would vote to start with Plan C because if we ask teachers to go back when 67% are not comfortable, their heads may not be in the right place and they will not feel safe. She does not want to see people traumatized. She knows the kids will be educated with **Plan C**.
- ix. **Amy Carr:** She circles back to the teachers. She hears two-thirds of them are uncomfortable and worries about whether they will be at-risk for health conditions. This is a clear indication that we should hold off. **Plan C** is what we should use.

I. Final Comments:

- i. This vote is for the first four weeks and the Board will revisit the data matrix and teacher/family feedback to reexamine at the September 3 board meeting.

***Motion to approve revision to reopening with Plan C for the first four weeks until further review by Jennifer Johnson; seconded by Jared Tilley; motion carries. Rick Buckler and Leslie Fogarty dissent.***

***Motion to adjourn at 8:53 PM by Jennifer Johnson; seconded by Stephanie Painter; motion carries.***