



Lake Norman Charter School
Board Meeting Minutes
February Special Meeting Minutes February 16, 2022
6:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

General Meeting

Attending: Shannon Stein-superintendent, Rick Buckler, Jennifer Johnson, Jared Tilley, Leslie Fogarty, Amy Carr, Elizabeth Timkovich, Nicole Benford

Meeting called to order at 6:30 PM by Rick Buckler

I. New Business:

A. Safe Schools Committee:

1. **New Information:** Consider updated guidance from NCDHHS from February 10. The toolkit was updated and will be effective on February 21. These updates include:
 - a. Contact tracing is no longer recommended.
 - b. No longer automatically recommend keeping students and staff out of school if they have had suspected exposure
 - c. Quarantine is only required for any person who tests positive for coronavirus or who has symptoms.
 - d. These changes will have a positive impact on school absences.
 - e. Because there has been a drop in COVID infection rates, it is expected Mecklenburg County will discontinue the mask mandate.
 - f. All school-age children can be vaccinated.
 - g. LNC has COVID tests available.
 - h. On February 1 the local metrics were updated for the week of 2/12/22 decreasing from 20.8% to 15.9%.
 - i. As of 2/14 Mecklenburg County is still in the red but is dropping.
 - j. The LNC COVID dashboard was updated today and there has been a drop in COVID numbers and exposures. Elementary School Cases 7; 1 exposure. Middle School 1 case; 0 exposures. High School 2 cases; 0 exposures.
2. **Recommendation:** The Safe Schools Committee recommends that starting February 22 masking becomes optional for students, staff, and visitors contingent on Mecklenburg County discontinuing the mask mandate. The dashboard will continue to be posted for positive cases and reported exposures.
 - a) Why the change?
 - 1) Contact tracing was deemed ineffective.
 - 2) Universal masking is not as effective unless KN-95 masks are used. Cloth masks are not effective.
 - 3) All staff and students have the ability to have increased protection through vaccinations.
 - 4) Mandatory quarantine of exposed individuals has been eliminated.
 - 5) LNC has been monitoring other schools in the area that have mask optional protocols in place and they have not seen disproportional infection rates.
 - 6) LNC will continue with other mitigation strategies:
 - i. high-quality ventilation
 - ii. vaccinations are recommended
 - iii. Access to hygiene products and procedures (handwashing, sanitizer, spray

desks, etc.)

- iv. Routine cleaning and disinfection protocols
- v. regular electrostatic sanitation
- vi. Sani-Q for all classrooms
- vii. Onsite rapid COVID testing
- viii. All teachers will continue to be offered N-95 masks for those who choose.

b) Questions:

- 1) Why are we waiting until February 22? The toolkit will not have the changes in effect until February 21, and following this toolkit helps the school avoid risks. We will wait for the Mecklenburg County mandate to change AND the NCDHHS Toolkit to change before we implement a new protocol.
- 2) How confident can we be with the numbers due to the home testing? This has always been an issue and the numbers have always been higher than they seem because only PCRs are being tracked. This is how it has been the entire time. Hospitalizations are going down and this is a more consistent metric to review.
- 3) Why are we meeting now to discuss this instead of waiting for the final say from the county and toolkit change? The number one reason we came together as a committee now is because so many new options are available to us now for protection. Because the community has new options, the mandate can change. Vaccinations are now available, the effectiveness of the masks and types of masks, along with the additional changes regarding quarantine and exposure, and because of these changes, LNC has the ability to change the protocol.
- 4) Please explain the language around masking in the toolkit. The toolkit says if you are in an area of widespread COVID, it is recommended to mask. Why are we changing? We are recommending that you continue to mask, but if a person is not comfortable, it is a personal decision to mask. This is a recommendation in the toolkit, not a mandate.
- 5) If this passes tonight, will the Safe Schools Committee remain intact and monitor the situation? Yes. When there is a need, the committee will meet.

Motion to approve the recommendation that starting February 22 that masking becomes optional for students, staff, and visitors contingent on Mecklenburg County discontinuing the mask mandate by Jared Tilley; seconded by Jennifer Johnson; motion carries.

Six Approved: Rick Buckler, Jennifer Johnson, Jared Tilley, Leslie Fogarty, Amy Carr, Elizabeth Timkovich
One opposed: Nicole Benford

Motion to end the meeting at 7:10 PM by Elizabeth Timkovich seconded by Amy Carr; motion approved.