

Wappingers Central School District Legislative Action Committee Meeting

Wednesday, February 17, 2021 -- 3:00 p.m.

This meeting will be held remotely via Zoom and live stream to the public at:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbmirHxXLln0yrMBhi6XJTA/videos>

Attendees: Eddy Slosower, John S. Morgan, John Lumia (arrived 3:25 p.m.), Rob Rubin, Jaclyn Coffman (arrived 3:35 p.m.), Sanjay Natesan, Carl DeMarco, Jr.

Others Present: Dr. Dwight Bonk (arrived 3:13 p.m., left 3:44 p.m.), Alberta Pedro

Not Present: Allison Conti

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Eddy Slosower at 3:09 p.m.

1. Approve Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes of the Jan. 20 meeting, as stated.

Motion by John Morgan

Second by Carl DeMarco Jr

Yes: Eddy Slosower, John Morgan, Rob Rubin, Sanjay Natesan, Carl DeMarco, Jr.

Motion passed.

2. Discuss Research on Assigned Goals

- Funding to Keep Schools Open – Unfunded Mandates to Require School Districts to test for COVID and provide PPE - [J. Coffman & A. Conti](#)
- Mental Health (Social Emotional Well Being) - [R. Rubin and S. Natesan](#)
- Preventing 20% Reduction/Withholding of State Aid -- \$9.6-11 million - [J. Morgan and C. DeMarco](#)

Funding to Keep Schools Open – Unfunded Mandates to Require School Districts to test for COVID and provide PPE - [J. Coffman & A. Conti](#)

- Dr. Bonk attends a weekly phone call with County Health Department officials. The original goal of this item was to advocate for additional funding to ensure adequate PPE equipment (testing, masks, gloves, disinfectant); however it has been a fluid situation.
- Dr. Bonk shared that during discussions with the Department of Health, the focus has shifted from testing to vaccination. The Governor initially indicated that zones would be based on positivity rates. However, there

have not been any new zones identified since January. Then, the criteria was based on hospitalization rate. Now, the State is focused on vaccination efforts and increasing availability of the vaccine. The District continues to work with the County and continues conversations on social distancing requirements and the ability to increase in-person instruction. The recently-released CDC guidelines continue to reaffirm the 6x6 social distance configuration.

- The District continues to look at increasing in-person instruction to four days per week on March 8, depending on the distancing guidelines. The district needs additional guidance on moving from a 6x6 configuration to a 6x3. The guidance has not been updated since August.
- There are three mitigation measures that the district could implement to allow social distancing in the 6x3 configuration. Some include: air purification in each classroom; the use of desk dividers; or COVID testing of students. Districts have purchased the acrylic desk enclosures. Plexiglass is illegal to use as it is against the fire code. Estimates for desk enclosures are approximately \$250,000 to \$500,000.
- It was suggested that the Committee consider advocating to secure funds in order to increase in-person instruction.
- Next Steps: Chair Slosower suggested that A. Conti and J. Coffman review the video of this meeting. After viewing the video, they should contact E. Slosower to discuss shifting gears on funding and also talk to R. Broas to get estimates.

Preventing 20% Reduction/Withholding of State Aid -- \$9.6-11 million - [J. Morgan and C. DeMarco](#)

- J. Morgan and C. DeMarco met with Senator Serino and Assemblyman Lalor to clarify the potential impact on school districts with the loss of State Aid. They have scheduled a meeting with Didi Barrett for Friday.
- Mr. Morgan reported that he received an email from Lalor's Office indicating that per the Division of Budget, School Aid will be funded for 2020-2021 school year and payments will be fully funded.
- The Division of Budget has not authorized the release of the money that has been held back at this point.
- Next Steps: Create a draft letter by the end of the week and email it to the committee for comment, so that it is ready for review at the next Legislative Action Committee meeting. The goal is to request the letter be on the 3/22 Board agenda for discussion and approval.

Mental Health (Social Emotional Well Being) - [R. Rubin and S. Natesan](#)

- R. Rubin and S. Natesan spoke with some of the district's building principals. They expressed the need for extra mental health resource officers and that there are not enough counselors. There is a need for additional social workers, especially training in mental health issues.
- Suggestions for resources included: mentoring, in-service on mental health issues, CAPE, Dutchess County Mental Health, helpline.
- Next Steps: Confirm with Mr. Zipp the services and resources offered by the school district. Prepare a letter or bullets to advocate for funding to increase positions for counselors (per diem or contract). Email the list to the committee members before the next meeting.

3. Schedule Next Meeting Date - The next Legislative Action Committee meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, March 10 at 3:00 p.m.**

4. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion by John Lumia

Second by Rob Rubin

Yes: Eddy Slosower, Rob Rubin, John Lumia, Sanjay Natesan, Carl DeMarco, Jr., Jaclyn Coffman

Motion passed.

The meeting ended at 4:03 p.m.