



The Association for the Advancement of Education, DBA, The Hawbridge School
Board of Directors' Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 23, at 6:00 p.m.

Zoom Link: <https://zoom.us/j/93330434815?pwd=Mkl5c3hYRlJYdkhxR2x3dHVMTVA0UT09>

- I. Call to Order 6:02
- II. Roll Call Natalya Barker (Chair), Kathryn Brown (Vice Chair), Dawnya Bohager (Treasurer), Megan Glancy (Secretary), April Williams, Christina Fisher, Renee Lynch, Davida Reid, and Todd Nicolet
Attending Executive Director and Faculty/Staff:
Jennifer Shelton (Director), Emily Martin (Dean of Students), Jonathan Farmer (Upper School Faculty Representative), and Kierca Kimbel (Lower School Faculty Representative)
- III. Approval of Agenda
- IV. Public Comment – Community member J. Platt shared regarding previous experience measuring metrics regarding restrictions; expressed support for current mask mandates; referenced the ABC science initiative and their evidenced based policy recommendations for schools; key recommendations include masks and rapid testing; asked the BOD to consider setting up a task force to generate a set of metrics to determine when to lift the mask mandate; J. Gillis spoke in support of dropping the mask mandate; expressed concern that the children have worked with masks for long enough; D. Huffman spoke in support of dropping the mask mandates; expressed concern for the students having to continue to wear masks, expressed consideration for other people's concerns regarding masks and encouraged individual choice; expressed that their child is unhappy in a mask at school; Community member expressed support for individual choice as well as the concerns regarding lifting mask mandates; expressed that the children have been burdened unduly by ongoing mask mandates; expressed concerns that this reflects to them they are responsible for prevention and carrying the burden for everyone; expressed that there is also a burden associated with lifting the mask mandates; expressed support for civil discourse; S. Peterson spoke in support of maintaining the mask mandates for the time being; raised concerns regarding new sub-variant and the many unknowns regarding this variant; expressed understanding for the desire to be done with masks and have individual choice, but reiterated the need for community action until we have more information regarding the subvariant; B. Boyd expressed support for lifting the mask mandate; expressed that the children are tired of masks and we cannot accommodate every new variant; expressed her children are

unhappy wearing masks at school and wish to be free from wearing masks; expressed concern that masks have become a symbol of death and the continued wearing of masks is harmful to children; raised issue of outcomes for children vs. other populations; J. Reemsnyder supported maintaining the mask mandate; expressed that her children do not have issues with the masks and that the safety concerns outweigh concerns regarding wearing/tolerating masks; raised concerns for those who are too young to be vaccinated; expressed that this includes many teachers with children at home who are too young to get the vaccination; K. Hiltbold expressed that as the parent of a high risk child, they support lifting the mask mandate; their child is limited by wearing a mask and has been challenged; expressed that if the BOD relied on the State leadership previously and should continue to do so at this juncture; A. Alred spoke in support of lifting the mask mandate; expressed that their child is new to the school and the masks have made making connections more difficult; expressed that schools continuing to ask children to mask is a burden we are not asking adult to shoulder; expressed concern that wearing a mask causes anxiety; expressed that masks should be optional; J. Estrada agreed that everyone is sick of masks but expressed that as a teacher at a school that just went mask optional, most students chose to wear masks; suggested mask mandate be lifted on March 1; B. Massingill raised concerns regarding what happens after we lift the mandate and have a case at school; how will quarantine be handled?; suggested waiting 2 weeks to assess how other schools fare after lifting their mask mandates; expressed that many adults are still wearing masks in public and thus see continued masking in schools as an extension of this behavior; K. Tillman shared their background in infectious diseases as well as their own higher risk factors; expressed concerns for the teachers feelings on this issue; asked if teachers are feeling safe and where they stand in terms of masking; expressed discomfort for dropping the mask mandate in the absence of having an alternate plan clearly outlined; proposed we wait 3 weeks and observe what other schools are doing and learn more about the emerging variant; J. Wilson expressed support for lifting the mask mandate; expressed that children can still contract COVID despite mask mandates at schools; expressed concern for the ways mask restrict children and frustration over continued mask mandates; Community member stated that their family trusts the school to have the children's interest at heart; expressed sympathy for the position schools and BODs are put in to make this choice; expressed that their family will support the school and the BOD regardless of outcome; J. Walker raised the concern that the upper school just reopened; reiterated the need for metrics before lifting the mandate; expressed that there is a substitute shortage which could be potentially exacerbated; expressed concerns for upper school students missing any further face to face instruction.

V. Consent Items

- A. Approved of Previous Meeting's Minutes
- B. Approved next meeting March 30th @ 6pm via Zoom

VI. Reports

- A. Board

about safety if masks are no longer required; expressed that many faculty feel resigned to the inevitable lifting of mandates but are still concerned; expressed concern regarding the transition; move in to the PODS and reengaged being back in school has been rewarding but challenging; being on campus has been exciting.

VII. Unfinished Business

- A. Mask Policy – T. Nicolet expressed thanks for all who have shared regarding masks and particularly for those who collected information from our faculty regarding their views; acknowledged that no matter what path we take there will be a significant number of people who are unhappy; shared frustration that school boards have been left with the responsibility to undertake this task; reviewed our previous attempts to rely on the science and DPI for guidance; shared what the governor recently stated regarding lifting mask mandates and what surrounding schools are doing; Alamance (optional immediately); Chatham (March 7), Durham, Orange are keeping mandates; suggested that staying with the guidance provided and move to a mask optional policy as of March 7th; K. Brown stated that there are many family passionate about the issue on both sides; expressed that our uniquely inclusive community allows for making masks optional without negatively impacting students or the community; A. Williams raised questions regarding policy; R. Lynch suggested making the expectations clear and assessable to the community if/when mandates make changes; N. Barker expressed the need to keep the most vulnerable safe and the difficulty of making these recommendations; M. Glancy expressed the need to determine the metrics both virus and administrative which should be met prior to lifting a mask mandate; discussed the possibility of scheduling a BOD meeting for March 6th to make final determinations prior to March 7th; faculty representatives were asked if they feel this timeframe allows enough time to make adjustment; J. Farmer expressed that would be adequate time and there are limited interventions that can be done to prepare in advance; K. Kimbel reiterated that the time frame is adequate and that conversations regarding respectful transitions should occur at home; J. Shelton stated that there is not a tremendous amount to do in order to prepare to lift masks; E. Martin expressed that lifting mask mandates is coming regardless (Free the Smiles Act) and that school may not have a voice in this process for much longer; suggested preparing now seems practical; N. Barker summarized that the current mask policy will stay in effect until March 7th with the amendment to make masks optional outdoors. BOD will meet on March 6th to review any changes in COVID spread or guidance; on the agenda for March 6th meeting will be a vote to remove the mask mandate effective immediately; Motion passed with one abstention from N. Barker.
- B. Amendment of Bylaws – will move forward now that the minutes from January are approved.
- C. Hawbridge Expansion Update (Little Diversified and Aspire Construction) – shared slides with updated images and reported on progress including sidewalks, drainage, retaining walls, gas meter and site prep for laying asphalt soon; Interior work continues and includes painting, stairs, and trim; much progress has been made; latest update puts finish date a 3.31 although this seems ambitious and it seems likely to be 2-3 more weeks beyond this date; weather will be a determinant but preparing for an extension

beyond this date is recommended; onsite meeting it tomorrow; no new issues to report regarding material procurement concerns; reiterated that they do not anticipate issues with inspections similar to the PODS; reiterated that CT Wilson is in good standing with the inspectors and have experience with school construction projects in the area.

VIII. New Business

- A. 22-23 Calendar – J. Shelton developed the new calendar with the faculty with few differences from this year; the main difference is a shorter conference week with those dates moved to spring; draft has been posted and no feedback has been received; BOD unanimously approved the calendar.
- B. Bank Resolution to authorize J. Shelton as bank representative; motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved; Resolution passed with full consent of the Board.

IX. Closed Session – 7:59

- A. To Consider Confidential Matters Pursuant to NC G.S. §143-318.11
 - i. Subsection (a) - (5)

X. Adjourn – 8:52

Submitted,

E. Megan Glancy
Board Secretary

Reviewed,

Natalya Barker
Board Chair