

**ONEONTA CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION  
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING  
AUGUST 24 2020**

The Oneonta City Board of Education met in a special called meeting August 24, 2020, at 6:00 p.m. in the Oneonta High Auditorium. Members present were Don Maples, President, Patrick Adams, Ricky Hicks, Steve Anderton and Sharon Breaseale.

**AGENDA APPROVED:**

On a move from Mr. Hicks and a second from Mr. Adams, the board unanimously approved the agenda.

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

President Maples recognized and opened the floor to the parent delegation to speak to the Board. Parent Kevin Faust addressed the Board and Superintendent to voice concerns regarding the practices followed for the opening and operation of school in conjunction with the COVID-19 pandemic. Areas identified related to the procedures followed, diagnosis and attendance protocols for students showing COVID symptoms, quarantine procedure of students and staff exposed to those students, athletics, learning paths and a request for updates from the Central Office. A petition was referenced but was not submitted to the Board.

Superintendent Smith stated the system made decisions based upon the guidelines released by the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) and Alabama State Department of Education. Each school system made their own decision which guidelines to follow. Opening/operation plans and learning path decisions vary widely between systems across the state. ALSDE and ADPH guidelines have been changed frequently, which factored into our decision to delay the start of school and to offer the two learning paths with middle and high school traditional students on the hybrid learning plan for the first grading period. OCS has followed the ADPH protocols of reporting incidents and followed the stated course of action. New ADPH guidelines went into effect today, which we will follow. Student and faculty safety is and will continue to be the number one concern which was factored into our decisions. Attached is the statement provided by Mr. Smith.

President Maples extended the invitation to any other parent or attendee to address the board with their concerns, but none chose to speak.

On a move from Mr. Adams and a second from Mr. Hicks the meeting was adjourned.

  
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SECRETARY

  
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PRESIDENT

Daniel Smith

OCS , Superintendent

Statement for OCS BOE Meeting

August 24, 2020

Since our schools closed in March, we have worked to provide the best avenue for our students to learn and be connected to their school. We closed the school year in a most unlikely way.

We have planned and prepared for our new school year while facing uncertainty and dealing with changes weekly and sometimes daily. Our hopes were to open the new school year on August 6 but instead we moved the opening to August 18.

In planning for the new school year, we gathered information from our community, parents and students from surveys. We gathered information from our state educational leaders at the ASDE and from state and local health professional leaders. We followed this information to form our school calendar, our class schedules and our learning platform.

Prior to the opening of school, our teachers were introduced to a new learning platform – Schoology. Our school nurses were advised by the ADPH and the CDC on guidelines to follow with both children and adults. Other recommendations were issued by the Governor for

schools to follow concerning the health and safety of individuals. We have attempted to follow these guidelines as they have been written. Some of these guidelines have changed as well...some weekly. As the guidelines changed, we adjusted to change with them. Today, we have received another update from the ADPH for us to follow.

These health guidelines have been recommended to help keep both students and adults as safe and healthy as possible. Again, we chose to adopt our current calendar to reflect these ADPH recommendations.

OCS Schedule:

Elementary = Mondays are for Remote Learning

Tuesday – Friday = students have the choice of attending school in the traditional manner or remote learning.

Middle School and High School = Mondays are for Remote Learning

Tuesday – Friday = A Hybrid “A” / “B” schedule

½ students, “A” attend Tuesday and Wednesday

½ students, “B” attend Thursday and Friday

This Hybrid schedule was one recommended by health experts as a safe approach for various reasons.

1. Mondays allows for deep cleaning of the schools / campus
2. Allows all students to experience learning remotely and to be ready if the situation arises for all students to move to full time remote learning.
3. Allows for less crowded conditions in middle school and high school classrooms, common areas and school buses.

4. The ADPH views middle school and high school students may spread the COVID virus as adults do.

Some school systems in our state have chosen to be completely Remote for teaching and learning. Examples are Jefferson County, Birmingham City, Huntsville City, Madison City and Madison County to name a few of the 31 systems choosing remote learning.

Some school systems in our state have chosen a choice of traditional or remote learning with some attending four days a week and some attending five days a week. Blount County Schools are an example of this method.

Some school systems in our state have chosen the Hybrid model as OCS has in place. Examples are Hoover, Mountain Brook, Arab, Boaz, Jacksonville City, Homewood City and Vestavia City to name a few of the 25 school systems that have chosen the hybrid model.

Note: The ASDE allows each school district to choose / adopt a method / platform for teaching and learning. OCS chose the state adopted platform of Schoology as recommended. The ASDE provides each system and each teacher with support while using this platform for learning. We will review our current Hybrid method at the conclusion of the first nine week grading period and decide if this schedule can be changed or altered.

#### Extracurricular Activities:

I understand the questions regarding the extracurricular activities associated with OCS. We have attempted to follow the guidelines given to the schools from the ADPH and the AHSAA. We have stopped

practices in the summer and pre-season practices due to positive COVID test results for coaches, players or multiple symptoms of COVID displayed by student athletes. The health guidelines required us to follow the close contact regulations associated with COVID, which we did. Prior to any practice being cancelled, our coaches, administrators or myself conferred with our school nurses or another health professional for advisement as to what should be done. There are other schools in our state who have reacted similarly in regards to cancellations. Some schools have cancelled two and three weeks of their football games – Vestavia, Beulah. Some schools have cancelled their entire seasons of athletic events. Some school districts have chosen to not allow their high school bands travel to away football games. We are trying to not cancel any other events other than those events that have already been canceled.

Each week we are updated from the ADPH. Today, August 24, we received new updates. These new guidelines hopefully will help us so that going forward we will not have to cancel the practices for entire teams or groups. We will continue to do what is the best regarding safety for our students and employees regarding extracurricular activities.

I understand that there are many factors that have caused us to do things that all of us do not agree with and are not enjoyable. I realize that there are “fun” experiences” that have been lost. I do not know of any business, educational institution or entertainment venue that has not been changed or affected in a negative way. I do know that our responsibilities are to follow the health recommendations from experts and to do everything that we can to help keep our students, our employees and our community as safe and as healthy as possible.