



Holmes, Donna <dholmes@palisadesd.org>

Community Message September 16, 2021

1 message

Dr. Bridget O'Connell <superintendent@palisadesd.org>

Thu, Sep 16, 2021 at 6:33 PM

Reply-To: dholmes@palisadesd.org

To: dholmes@palisadesd.org



Dear Palisades Community,

I wanted to take this opportunity to address two events that occurred last night. First, at 6PM the district held a ceremony at our middle school to commemorate the 20th anniversary of 9/11 and to recognize those who perished on that day, as well as those who have served in the military since the attacks on that day. Also at the ceremony, we had the honor of rededicating the sculpture created by two of our then middle school students, Ellen Aikens and Sarah Frye (graduates of PHS Class of 2007). Sarah and her family were present to accept an American flag and a citation from our special guest, US Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick.

Servicemen from the American Legion presented the colors to begin our event. State Representative Shelly Labs sent a certificate, as well as an American flag and Pennsylvania flag for our middle school to display honoring this solemn anniversary. In addition, many community members were present last evening to take part in the ceremony including several School Board members, firefighters from the Ottsville, Upper Black Eddy and Riegelsville Fire Departments, representatives from the Upper Bucks Emergency Medical Services, and Emergency Managers from Riegelsville and Nockamixon.

Chorus students from PALMS, under the direction of Ms. Brittany Baumeister, performed two songs for the assembled crowd - the Star Spangled Banner and Proud to Be an American - both were beautifully executed by our students. The evening ended with refreshments served by our cafeteria staff and a special cake from the bakery at the Upper Bucks County Technical School. I could not be more grateful for the team that organized the event and the community members who participated in and attended the rededication.

Following the ceremony, the Board began their regularly scheduled meeting in the PALMS auditorium at 7PM. Due to the number of people that attended the meeting maskless, the meeting was called into recess and was set

to reconvene virtually at 8PM. When the meeting reconvened, a motion was called to adjourn and the meeting ended.

Why was the meeting recessed?

The PA Department of Health order sets forth that a school entity must require and enforce the requirements that all teachers, children/students, staff, and visitors wear a face covering indoors regardless of whether the order is reflected in a school entity's Health and Safety Plan.

After several requests and a warning specifying what would occur if members of the public failed to put on a mask, a motion was called and voted upon to recess the meeting virtually. As noted above, the Board is also required to enforce the masking order. It was clear, the Board was not able to enforce the order in the face to face setting.

Why didn't the meeting continue virtually?

When the Board recessed the meeting and explained the meeting would move into a virtual setting (like all of last year), dozens of community members remained unmasked in the PALMS auditorium. Again, the Board is required to enforce the order and with members of the public refusing to leave and remaining unmasked, the Board adjourned the meeting so people would leave district property.

Why can people be maskless outside or in other non-school locations?

The Order specifies that each teacher, child/student, staff or visitor working, attending or visiting a School Entity shall wear a face covering indoors, regardless of vaccine status. This order does not place requirements when teachers, child/students, staff or visitors are outside, nor does it require face coverings in locations other than school buildings and on school buses.

What happens next?

Students were not in session today, so the PALMS custodial staff had the opportunity to use our sanitizing equipment in the auditorium in preparation for students' arrival tomorrow. In addition, until further notice all Board meetings both regular and committee meetings, will be conducted virtually as they were held last year. Information regarding how to access the upcoming meetings will be forthcoming.

I have included links to the Order and subsequent FAQs issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Health for your review.

PA Order:

<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/Documents/Diseases%20and%20Conditions/Order%20of%20the%20Acting%20Secretary%20Directing%20Face%20Coverings%20in%20Schools.pdf>

PDE FAQ:

<https://www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/emergencyplanning/COVID-19/SchoolReopeningGuidance/ReopeningPreKto12/MaskingOrder/Pages/FAQs.aspx>

Kind regards,



Dr. Bridget O'Connell

Superintendent

9/17/21, 10:53 AM

Palisades School District Mail - Community Message September 16, 2021

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