



**DESERT
SANDS
UNIFIED
SCHOOL
DISTRICT**

**Desert Sands Unified School District
Minutes**

Special Board Meeting

March 01, 2022, 5:00 PM

District Education Center Boardroom

47-950 Dune Palms Road, La Quinta, California

Open Session at 5:00 p.m.

1. Call to Order

Minutes:

President Ana Conover called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Minutes:

The Pledge of Allegiance led by Member Linda Porras, was repeated in unison.

3. Roll Call

Minutes:

President Ana Conover noted all Board members, Superintendent, and Cabinet members were present, except Mr. Jacob Alvarez.

4. Approval of Agenda

4.1. Agenda of Special Board Meeting on March 01, 2022

Minutes:

Member Jacob Alvarez arrived to the meeting at 5:03 p.m.

Motion Passed: Approve the agenda of the special meeting of March 01, 2022, with any additions or deletions that receive a unanimous vote. Passed with a motion by Tricia Pearce and a second by Linda Porras.

Yes Jacob Alvarez

Yes Ana Conover

Yes Wendy Jonathan

Yes Tricia Pearce

Yes Linda Porras

5. Public Comment On Open Session Items

Minutes:

Vice President Wendy Jonathan read the online public comments, as submitted:

1. Lowell and Rizga's public online comment: "I'd love to see the data: Is there a survey that has gone out to families and teachers and staff? I would also like to know what specific case counts and scenarios would trigger mask wearing again. I personally would like to move more towards a culture like what they have in many Asian culture where folks wear masks when they're ill and normalizing that behavior. That being said, I strongly support masking to prevent community spread and protect students and worker safety. I am terrified of January 2022 reoccurring again. I can't handle the burden of being asked to cover my colleagues' classes because they were out sick anymore, or having to keep in touch with 50 students constantly on what they were missing. I'm STILL recovering from lost prep time. We need to protect our vulnerable immune compromised students and staff. We have lost loved ones. It's senseless. I feel like a stack of comorbidities in a trench coat. I just feel so damn defeated as a teacher right now. I'm so damn tired. I thought I knew how disrespected teachers were pre-pandemic, the past two years have shown us. Teachers are not martyrs. There's no proof of child development issues with masking yet all the proof that masks work to prevent infection, when thousands still did every day from COVID. If you want to burn out your staff even more, go ahead. But this K-12 status quo is not sustainable. It's also worth noting, highlighting the political stakes, school mask rule ends same day as midterm candidate filing deadline. Stop playing politics with people's lives. Please require people to get vaccinated before we remove our masks. They're the most critical tool we have for protecting ourselves and others. I can't handle this whiplash anymore."

2. Jerry Dohn's public online comment: "Dear Mister Superintendent, and Esteemed Members of the Board, I am writing today to voice my concerns regarding the masking of students. We hear all the time let's follow the science. Below are science facts backed up with sources. I submit the following to you: From Quora.com <https://www.quora.com/What-is-the-size-of-the-Covid-19-virus?share=1> "The size of covid 19 is about 0.125 microns." From SafetyandHealthMagazine.com <https://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/20459-oshaupdates-faqs-to-address-particle-sizes-and-n95s> "The "N95" classification means respirator filters remove at least 95% of "very small" particles (around 0.3 microns in diameter) from the air." ~So ok, let's do the math. 0.125 microns < (is less than) 0.3 microns. My comment is that despite all good intentions, masks are not capable of stopping a virus due to the physical size of the virus and filtration capability of an N95 mask. Sincerely and respectfully yours, Jerry H. Dohn."

3. Trina Alesa-Gonzales, DSTA (Desert Sands Teachers Association) president, expressed as a representative of DSTA, they have stood in solidarity with the district and the decisions that have been made in the health and safety guidelines for our staff and students from March 15, 2020. They feel the district's guidance has been based on county health guidance and we haven't veered from that so far. She reiterated the certificated union stands in solidarity with the decisions of the district.

4. Kenny Snell thanked the Board for letting him back inside the boardroom today to exercise

my first amendment right. He appreciated being back because he was not allowed in for the last two meetings. Mr. Snell noted he was in attendance representing parents that couldn't attend the meetings early start time. There are three things in education that could be really important for us, inquiry, lifelong learner, and critical thinking. Regarding inquiry, you have to go beyond your TV, in this district, all we hear is what you heard on your TV last night. It's been a month since the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) finally admitted the cloth mask and surgical mask, if they're not detrimental to you they have no significant impact in stopping COVID. It's been a month since they told you to only wear N95 masks. He asked how many were using an N95 mask in the boardroom; it seemed only enforcement. Part of critical thinking is looking at the data, which parents have been telling you now for a while since the beginning, about the cloth mask. Over 100 peer-reviewed studies say masks are significant or insignificant, statistically nothing can help prevent the spread of COVID and masks are detrimental to your health and mental health, especially for kids. Guess how many studies there are that say they are effective? Zero, not one peer reviewed study, and we know the importance of peer reviewed studies in education because peer reviewed means the results can be repeated. If it's not peer reviewed and can't be peer reviewed, it's just junk science. Mr. Snell challenged Board members to practice some inquiry and look at the science that they are going to discuss, because there is no science. They say there is science, but do they ever cite it? He has been attending Board meetings for a year and from the very first time everything he provided and said has been primary source data. If it's not data from the CDC, you need to go beyond the first page to look at the data. He asked if the district was aware that OSHA says for a properly fitted N95 mask, you must have a Fit Test. You're supposed to put it on, smile and frown, bend over, and do all kinds of things. You can't just go out to buy one, put it on, and expect it to be effective. Is the district having Fit Tests? We start to realize that you've been lied to for years, and that you're going to follow the same people that have been lying to you. He encouraged the Board to go out and look for data. He would be more than happy to assist.

6. General Functions - Superintendent

6.1. Updated Health Guidance - Student Masks

Minutes:

Superintendent Bailey thanked Board members for agreeing to have another board meeting which makes three in one week. It's an important topic, almost two years after the COVID related emergency school closures and based on declining COVID-19 case and hospitalizations. Yesterday, Governor Newsom announced changes to the state's indoor mask requirements. Mr. Bailey presented a diagram of the Dailey Active Cases (Positive Test) dating back to August 2021 of this school year and the hill we just climbed. The good news is we're coming down off that steep incline of case and positivity data. We learned yesterday, under the updated state guidance masks will not be required but will be strongly recommended after March 11 in schools and childcare facilities. This news will be met with relief by some and cause anxiety for others, as noted in the comments. Mr. Bailey reassured the educational community that the pre-existing COVID mitigation strategies outlined in the district's COVID Safety Plan will remain in effect. Some of those things that you may recall, will be the HEPA filters, the HVAC MERV 13 filtration systems, air scrubbers in schools and on school buses, hand sanitizers, mobile wash stations, etc. Face masks will continue to be made available by request. As this Board has consistently walked

in lockstep with ever changing public health guidelines during the pandemic, he recommended the Board take action for the following motion to align the new guidelines. The amended recommendation is as follows, including updated information that was received today for clarification and would be added regarding how this mandate applies to staff and to school buses. Approve to adopt new indoor mask guidelines for students and staff, and move from mask requirements to mask recommendations in schools and school buses effective after March 11 2022. As a caveat, the district remains subject to prevailing public health guidelines and orders at any given time. Thank you.

President Ana Conover asked, is there a motion to approve to adopt new indoor mask guidelines for students and staff and moved from mask requirement to mask recommendations in schools and school buses effective after March 11, 2022.

Vice President Wendy Jonathan reiterated what she said in the past. She noted she didn't know what was magical about March 11, because we can go into a movie theater right now with all of our kids and families, take off our masks, and enjoy a movie. But we're still having an issue with schools. Mrs. Jonathan expressed she is frustrated, as are other people, because it's not consistent which has been her issue all along. She wanted to go on record that it's really ludicrous to say on March 11, something happens in our air, in our classrooms and in our schools, and now everything is okay.

Member Tricia Pearce stated she didn't think something magical would happen on that day. She noted the district has been under the guidance of the Health Department, the governor's recommendations, and their decisions. We don't know why they picked that particular day, but we will follow the safety guidelines that we are given, because that's what we're here to do.

Member Jacob Alvarez noted he agreed with Trustee Pearce.

Member Linda Porras stated she was glad the district was moving in a positive direction. She hoped we were going to have an end to the masks and everything else and was glad for the positive outcome. We were kind of hoping for it after a year, but it's been two years now; however, she is thankful the district is moving forward.

President Ana Conover thanked all the parents that reached out. She received many, many emails, as well as her colleagues. In pro and against this recommendation that the Board is ready to vote on. It has been a long road. Ms. Conover thanked her fellow board members. I know our board is different than when we started this journey. She thanked cabinet members for all the work they have done.

Motion Passed: Approve to adopt new indoor mask guidelines for students and staff and move from mask requirements to mask recommendations in schools and school buses effective after March 11, 2022. Passed with a motion by Linda Porras and a second by Tricia Pearce.

Yes Jacob Alvarez
Yes Ana Conover
Yes Wendy Jonathan

Yes Tricia Pearce
Yes Linda Porras

7. Adjournment

Minutes:

The Board adjourned at 5:16 p.m.