

**AGENDA**  
**SCHOOL BOARD OF SANTA ROSA COUNTY**  
**WORKSHOP**  
**April 20, 2021-5:00 PM**

Items for Review and Discussion

A. Review of Covid Mitigation Strategies

*The School Board of Santa Rosa County met for the Review of Covid Mitigation Strategies Workshop at 5:00 P.M. with the following members present: Mrs. Wei Ueberschaer, Chairperson; Mrs. Linda Sanborn, Vice-Chairperson; Mrs. Carol Boston, Mr. Charles Elliott, and Mrs. Elizabeth Hewey.*

*Also present were School Board Attorney, Terry Harmon; and Dr. Karen Barber, Superintendent of Schools and Secretary.*

*For a complete word for word transcript, please see the video. The following presentations to the Board have been condensed.*

*Mrs. Ueberschaer called the meeting to order and reminded attendees that this workshop is for information purposes only. Any Board action will be taken during the regular Board meeting following the workshop.*

*Mrs. Ueberschaer continued that we understand there are passionate opinions on both sides of this topic; we ask that all speakers and audience members remain respectful and maintain decorum. Outbursts will not be tolerated.*

*This workshop was publicly noticed to last for sixty minutes. If time allows, there may be public speaking (comments) at the end of the workshop. If we run out of time, there is a public forum section in our regular Board meeting.*

*Superintendent Dr. Karen Barber stated that this workshop was scheduled with the topic being school construction. After the April 6 Board meeting the topic was changed to covid mitigation strategies. This will allow more time for parents and community to have input on the original topic of school facility construction.*

*Dr. Barber continued that all parent/community emails and information sources have been shared with Board members.*

*Michael Thorpe, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, came forward to review the presentation including the following items. (Please see the power point presentation on our website for detailed information.)*

- *Employee Survey Data*

- *Parent Survey Data*
- *Enrollment Data*
- *Local Data*
- *FLDOE Memo*
- *Research*
- *Input from the Medical Community*
- *Current Covid Data for SRCSD*
- *Board Discussion*

*Mr. Thorpe shared that four employees have died from Covid-19 during the 2020-2021 school year; the most recent death was April 9, 2021.*

*The employee survey showed that 14% want to keep the mask mandate; 39% want to keep the mask mandate until the end of the school year; 18% want to change the mask mandate to “encouraged” as soon as possible; and 29% want to remove the mask mandate.*

*The parent data showed that 18% want to keep the mask mandate; 29% want to keep it until the end of the school year; 13% want the mask mandate changed to “encouraged;” and 40% want the mask mandate removed.*

*Mr. Thorpe spoke of the Florida Department of Education Memo dated April 14, 2021:*

*“We ask that districts, which currently are implementing a mandated face covering policy, revise their policy to be voluntary for the 2021-2022 school year.”*

*He also noted information from the Santa Rosa Health Department on the effect of wearing a mask as well as research articles on masks. Mr. Thorpe then talked about the correct use of masks and the negative vs. positive effects of masks.*

*Mr. Thorpe shared the current Covid data for Santa Rosa School District (which is updated daily on our website).*

*He then provided opinion of mask usage from our local medical community of pediatric physicians. The last two pages of the presentation included references submitted by parents.*

*The first guest speaker to address the Board was Dr. Randall Reese, M.D. Dr. Reese shared that he has been practicing in Santa Rosa County for 22 years. He pointed out that he agrees with the opinions of Drs. Kevin and Laura Maupin that correct and universal use of masks as well as physical distancing should be implemented at all schools. Dr. Reese also spoke with the chief of pediatrics at Sacred Heart Children’s Hospital, a cardiologist at Sacred Heart Children’s Hospital, the director of the pediatric emergency room at Sacred*

*Heart Children's Hospital, six pediatricians who work in Santa Rosa County, an internationally known infectious disease pediatrician, the president of the Florida chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the past president of the Florida chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. They all agree with the CDC and the American Association of Pediatrics recommendation that children should wear masks. Dr. Reese continued that in his practice, he's had four teenagers and young children who, after having Covid, developed mild carditis (inflammation of the heart), and had to be referred to a cardiologist. Cardiologists that he spoke to informed him that they're seeing more cases of mild carditis than they've ever seen before. He shared that a 15-year old who passed away in January had tested positive for Covid antibodies; medical authorities felt that he had been asymptomatic.*

*Dr. Reese explained that some of the articles presented had issues. For example, one of the sources published an article supporting mask wearing after publishing one opposing masks. The article opposing masks was published as a medical hypothesis by Dr. Baruch Vainshelboim (and has been retracted).*

*Dr. Joel Rudman, M.D., came forward next. Dr. Rudman began that he feels that one of the slides shown in the presentation is incorrect (slide #13). He questioned several of the statements on the slide and referred those in attendance to the CDC website. Dr. Barber responded the slide came from the Health Department and she will reach back to them to see if there is a new interpretation.*

*Dr. Rudman stated that he has been a resident of Navarre since 2004 and practices family medicine in Navarre. He stated that he's just asking the Board "to think;" look at what experts are saying versus what they're not saying. Look at how their actions sometimes contradict what they're saying. Dr. Rudman stated that his entire presentation is based on CDC guidelines. He pointed out that he practices other protocols because he does not trust a cloth mask to protect himself from Covid.*

*Dr. Rudman read excerpts from CDC guidelines. "For every positive case we're sending home 24 other children. Why do we need quarantine if the masks are effective?"*

*He stated that, according to the CDC, there are three things that exempt you from quarantine – immunity from having had the disease; vaccination (not currently offered to those under sixteen); and distance from student who was positive.*

*Dr. Rudman stated that this is personal for him; he donated over 2,000 surgical grade masks at the start of the school year to schools in Navarre. When the CDC defined possible exposure as less than six feet away from a positive case Dr. Rudman assumed that his surgical grade masks would count as protection. Then the CDC announced that even if you wore a mask you were considered*

*high risk and would still be quarantined. He added that for those who believe masks work he has 150 Covid positive patients in his practice who would disagree. He stated the mortality rate for kids with Covid is .01%. The hippocratic oath states that a doctor must "first do no harm;" he feels that wearing a mask is causing psychological harm.*

*Dr. Timothy Boyett, M.D. came up next; Dr. Boyett stated that he has been in private and academic medicine for the last 15 years; he also has a Masters of Public Health and clarified that he does not practice public health and the comments he makes do not represent his employer. He stated that he is here tonight to speak in support of removing the mask mandate. Dr. Boyett shared that during the last thirteen months he has performed operations on numerous Covid positive patients and contracted Covid himself; he pointed out that he has been wearing an N-100 mask which is rated higher than the N-95 mask. He stated that he recovered in 72 hours using outpatient treatment made available by forward thinking physicians throughout the country. Covid and influenza are both respiratory viruses that are similar in transmission route; though Covid is thought to be 2-3 times more infectious. He felt it important to note that in randomized control trials of the influenza virus in 2019 it was not thought that using masks reduced the transmission rate.*

*Dr. Boyett noted that there is data supporting both sides; a 2015 study concluded that wearing a cloth mask is worse than wearing no mask at all. He added that he feels children have experienced increased anxiety during our battle with Covid. He feels that masking asymptomatic students at school has the propensity to cause damage in relationships and learning. He would like for masks to be voluntary; and if a student is high risk the student should wear an N-95 mask which has been proven to be more effective than cloth masks.*

*Dr. Barber thanked speakers for attending as did Mrs. Ueberschaer.*

*Mrs. Ueberschaer opened the floor for Board members to comment.*

*Mrs. Hewey thanked teachers and employees for participating in the survey.*

*Mrs. Ueberschaer announced that anyone who would like to speak in the public forum section of the regular Board meeting should complete a form which can be found at the back of the room. She then adjourned the meeting at 6:02 P.M. with the reminder that the regular Board meeting will begin at 6:30 P.M.*