

**AGENDA**  
**SCHOOL BOARD OF SANTA ROSA COUNTY**  
**SPECIAL MEETING**  
**May 3, 2021-8:00 AM**

A. Call to Order and Roll Call

*The School Board of Santa Rosa County met in special session at 8:00 A.M. with the following members present: Mrs. Wei Ueberschaer, Chairperson; Mrs. Carol Boston, Mr. Charles Elliott, and Mrs. Elizabeth Hewey. Mrs. Sanborn was unable to attend.*

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

B. Pledge of Allegiance

*The Chairman called the meeting to order and Dr. Barber led us in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and in a moment of silence.*

C. Public Comment (Request to address the School Board)

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

*The Chairman called the meeting to order and Dr. Barber led us in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and in a moment of silence.*

*Chairman Wei Ueberschaer requested Board Attorney Terry Harmon provide an overview of how this special meeting came to be.*

*Mr. Harmon began by explaining that the special meeting requires 48 hours' notice; it was published on Friday, April 30. The only issue that can be addressed is the issue that was outlined in the purpose of calling this meeting. The only issue the Board may potentially take action on today is whether community health risks require masks or face coverings to be worn in schools. This is a special Board meeting; action taken will have the same impact as it would if taken at a regular Board meeting.*

*Chairperson Mrs. Ueberschaer reviewed the public comment section of the Board meeting. She noted that she will call speakers in the order the forms were received; speakers have three minutes to address the Board. Decorum and respect will be maintained.*

*Len Cross was the first speaker to come forward. He thanked Mrs. Sanborn; and stated that decorum must be maintained. He feels that speakers should be*

*allowed to say what they want and not be escorted out. Mr. Cross feels that the Board should listen to the parents; “y’all work for us and you can be removed.” “Your fears cannot be worn as a garment around someone else’s face.”*

*Melissa Blevins stated that this is the first time she’s attended a School Board meeting. Her fifteen year old has been so affected by wearing a mask that she is now homeschooling. This student suffers from social and emotional anxiety; masks hide facial expression which Ms. Blevins feels may cause more anxiety.*

*Halei Smead reiterated her feeling that face coverings have always been a personal choice and should never have been in the Code of Student Conduct. Ms. Smead expressed disappointment that the meeting today is categorized as a special meeting rather than an emergency meeting.*

*Lance Smith stated that his kids don’t know what their teachers look like due to masks; his son has declined academically. Mr. Smith feels that due to the size of the virus the only mask that works is an N95. He would like to resume normalcy.*

*Rick Staszak requested that if the mask is optional for students it also be made optional for teachers and staff.*

*John Clinton commented on the 48-hour meeting notice and the number of parents who showed up for the meeting. Mr. Clinton feels that this could have been a lesson in empathy to teach students to protect the students who are wearing masks. He also shared that it’s hard to read facial expression when masks are being worn.*

*Cynthia Licharowicz stated that she wishes when this first started she had told the School Board/Superintendent to “shove it.” She feels that designating deaths as Covid-related is a “money grab; it’s a way for the government to silence us.”*

*Michelle Hardman came forward to voice her dislike of masks. Ms. Hardman stated that 80% of deaths are old people and they’re going to die anyway. She feels that there is financial incentive to attribute deaths to Covid. She also shared that her child has asthma and wearing a mask all day affects him negatively and reduces his oxygen intake.*

*Chance Johnmeyer stated that he agrees with Commissioner Corcoran that masks inhibit learning and that data does not show that face coverings inhibit the spread of the virus. He shared that he feels that testing and data is driven by politics and he wants the masks removed.*

*Brandon Price feels that data is irrelevant at this point but what matters is personal freedom and how you want to breathe – how you want your child to breathe. “Are we living in Communist China?” He continued that he thinks the*

*Board wants to hide their face behind a mask.*

*Debbie Gunnoe stated that she's about to give a Civics lesson as the Board seems to be missing that part of their education. Ms. Gunnoe read the oath of office for Board members and then began reading the Constitution. She stated the Board owes an apology to parents who were limited to three minutes during the Board meeting on April 20. She added that she walked away from the fight six years ago ignoring the evils of Common Core. "The parents are awake and I'm back in the fight to stop this subversive indoctrination into critical race theory and all its relatives."*

*Keith Lunsford came forward to talk about masks. He feels that masks are a "Communist thing; Communists own the CDC; that's who's feeding our government. Y'all look like clowns with masks on your face."*

*David Jones came to the podium and stated that we have a lot of trust to rebuild. Mr. Jones feels that it's time to put the mask issue to bed; hopefully we can move forward after today. We have more pressing matters to address – the agricultural program, common core, critical race theory.*

*Donna Lunsford is a grandmother of nine children in this county. Ms. Lunsford stated that last week her grandson went to the pediatrician and when his mask was removed his oxygen level increased by four points. She continued that she grew up in California and she knows how Communism begins. She feels that this is wrong and must stop.*

*Natalie Hardenstein provided statistics on death rates for children from Covid. She stated that there were zero deaths in children up to age four; five children between the ages of five and fourteen died. "So we're masking children under the age of fourteen for five children over the last year and a half?" Ms. Hardenstein continued that there were 38 deaths under the age of 24 over the last year and a half. "Are we wearing masks for the teachers or for children?" She asked what are students to do if they have to cough or sneeze while wearing a mask.*

*Peter Morgan came forward to express his displeasure with the Board and Superintendent regarding masks. He stated that he is a former medical officer on the USS Enterprise. Mr. Morgan spoke of the micron size for the virus and how ineffective masks are. He feels that the entire Board, including Board Attorney Terry Harmon, should resign. He spoke of the School Board "following the money" and also referred to indoctrination by government.*

*Jerry Couey spoke of his dissatisfaction with the mask mandate. Mr. Couey stated that he doesn't care what the other counties or the rest of the country does; he cares what Santa Rosa does. Mr. Couey pointed out that he's convinced that this is about politics because the number of deaths in 2019 and 2020 are virtually the same although the categories are different. He*

*concluded that it has taken too long for the school district to get to the recommendation being made today.*

*A citizen spoke from the crowd asking when the Board will address curriculum questions. Mrs. Ueberschaer responded that the only item on today's agenda is the mask requirement.*

*Mrs. Ueberschaer asked if anyone else would like to address the Board. No one came forward and the public comment section of the meeting was closed.*

D. Item From Superintendent

1. Discussion/Recommendation Regarding Mask Requirement

*Dr. Barber spoke of July 2020 when the Surgeon General, Dr. Scott Rivkees, put the Public Health Advisory in place. The Public Health Advisory was the basis at that time for the School Board to establish a mandatory mask policy. On April 29, 2021, we received the notice that the July 2020 Public Health Advisory was rescinded. Based on that we are revisiting the policy which is the reason for the special meeting today.*

*Dr. Barber stated that she appreciates people voicing their opinion in a civil, respectful manner. All of the emails have been reviewed by Board Members as well as Dr. Barber; we've heard from students, parents, and employees who have the opposite opinion of those who spoke today.*

*Motion to Approve was moved by Charles Elliott, Seconded by Carol Boston. Motion Passed by a Vote of 5 - 0.*

*The Board approved Dr. Barber's recommendation to immediately move to face coverings recommended, not mandatory, effective May 3, 2021.*

*Board Chairperson Mrs. Ueberschaer stated that she read every communication from stakeholders; including those who have the opposite view.*

*Mrs. Ueberschaer read the following statement:*

*"I have read every communication to Dr. Barber and me from our stakeholders regarding face masks. I am truly sad that face masks have morphed from a protective strategy to a political issue. From the beginning of this pandemic, I have stated that I will follow public health guidance about Covid-mitigation measures. On Thursday, the highest-ranking public health official in our state has rescinded all public health advisories regarding face masks. While my preference would be to finish out the remaining weeks of this school year with the protocols that have been working in our schools all year, I will continue to rely on our public health officials to recommend their expertise in infectious disease control. I still strongly encourage the use of face masks, especially for*

*those who are not fully vaccinated. I strongly encourage those who are eligible to become fully vaccinated. My hope is that families will have a conversation with their children that face masks are now a personal choice and that students will respect the choices of their peers. I would like to thank all our teachers, support staff and administrators for their dedication to their students with all the challenges they were dealt this school year. I am truly sorry that we have to make this change with so little time left in the school year."*

*(Some of the audience members became unruly, spoke out of turn, and made derogatory comments.)*

*Dr. Barber addressed the parents who were not at the meeting who may choose for their student to continue to wear a face covering; "we will certainly support that. We will continue to use our air purification systems, hand sanitation stations. We want to focus the remainder of this school year on teaching, learning, and respecting both sides of this issue moving forward."*

*School Board Attorney Terry Harmon pointed out the Code of Student Conduct gives the Board the flexibility to determine whether community health risks require masks or face coverings; whether that needs to be revised in the future to determine the voluntary basis based on the decision today... (Mr. Harmon was interrupted several times by the audience.)*

E. Adjournment

*Motion to Approve was moved by Elizabeth Hewey, Seconded by Carol Boston. Motion Passed by a Vote of 5 - 0.  
There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.*

*DONE AND ORDERED IN LEGAL SESSION by the School Board of Santa Rosa County the 3rd day of May, 2021.*

SCHOOL BOARD OF  
SANTA ROSA COUNTY

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Chairman

ATTEST:

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Superintendent and Secretary

## Santa Rosa County District Schools

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**Submitted By:** Dr. Karen Barber, Superintendent

**Superintendent  
Action Agenda**

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**Title of Item:** Discussion/Recommendation Regarding Mask Requirement

**Description/Introduction:** The purpose of this agenda item is to discuss and potentially take action on the issue of whether community health risks require masks or face coverings to be worn in schools.

**Recommendation/Action Requested:**

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**Financial Impact:**

**A-Funds required from School Board?** No

**B-Amount required**

**C-Grant/Project Synopsis attached?** No

**D-Date Grant/Project Reviewed/Approved by Accountant:**

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**Legal Review**

**Does item require legal review?** No

**If Yes, Approval Date**

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**REVIEWERS:**

<b>Reviewer</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Date</b>
Pattullo, Melanie	Approved	4/30/2021 - 9:20 AM