



Kelly DiBenedetto
Chairperson
School Board
1200 E. 42nd Street
Indianapolis, IN 46205

Indiana School for the Deaf
School Board Meeting

September 15, 2020
5:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Via Zoom

Minutes

Voting Members Absent:

Non-Voting Members Absent:

P. J. McGrew

Voting Members Present:

Kelly DiBenedetto, Chairperson
Dr. Ray Furner
Andy Leffler
Terri Miller
Ann Reifel, Vice Chairperson
Amy Waggoner
Lucy Witte

Non-Voting Members Present:

Rep. Ed Clere
Patrick Rhodes

ISD Staff:

Superintendent Dr. Geeslin

- I. **Call to Order:** Chairperson DiBenedetto convened the meeting at 5:00 p.m., noting that a quorum was met.
- II. **Approval of minutes:** Motion by Ms. Witte, second by Mr. Leffler to accept the May 19, 2020 minutes as printed. Motion passed.
- III. **Chairperson's Remarks:** The meeting will primarily focus on Supt. Geeslin and the administrative staff providing the Board members an update on opening for the 2020-2021 school year.
- IV. **Superintendent report:** Supt. Geeslin expressed appreciation and commended ISD's staff preparing for students return to campus on August 31. Staff have navigated through the many changes and worked together for the betterment of our students.
 - There were challenges due to a Student Life staff shortage which caused a 2-week delay for residential students return to ISD. ISD, with cooperation from the LEAs, parents and staff worked together to enable residential students to start on Aug. 31.

The Indiana School for the Deaf is a bilingual educational environment where students belong, excel and thrive academically and socially.

- ISD families were given the option of students attending in person or virtual. 30% of ISD student are attending virtually for 9 weeks.
- ISD teachers are providing education in-person and a hybrid approach.
- Indiana Department of Health (ISDH) continues to check with ISD to see how we are doing and provide support as needed. They also supplied ISD with face shields for all ISD staff. ISDH is also empowering our nursing staff by providing information, helping develop protocol, and responding in less than an hour (most of the time) to inquiries.

➤ Matthew Krueger, Student Life Director

- Student Life staff and some ISD parents delivered iPads to all residential students on Aug. 28, 29 & 30 to enable students to start school with their peers.
- During the 2 weeks (without residential students) staff took the opportunity to “deep clean” dorm and neglected storage space areas.
- Developed/revised emergency procedures for each pod area.
- The Indianapolis Interscholastic School League announced the middle school fall sports program was cancelled. This was announced to all Middle School parents/athletes.
- Athletics:
 - High school volleyball, cross-country and fall cheerleading competitions are planned.
 - IHSAA suspended the high school football program. ISD high school football players will continue to train and have intramural games. ISD also hosted a flag football game last Thursday (players vs. staff).
 - Senior night will be held under ISD’s stadium lights (date to be determined).

➤ Kimberly Kause, Director of Instruction

- Recognized ISD staff’s flexibility as safety procedures developed before students arrived, changed in the morning after their arrival and then changed again at the end of the day.
- Teachers have been and continue to be positive during this challenge and everyone is working together supporting each other.
- ISD is in contact with “virtual” families to develop the best plan possible to support their students.
- All teachers have been trained on virtual teaching, should the mode of education become virtual for all students.

Board question: Has there been any problem from the local schools regarding logistics or student transportation?

Supt. Geeslin: The letter from the Department of Education to the local school corporations providing instructions that should a student become ill, and lived more than an hour away, it was the corporations’ responsibility to pick up the student and take them home. ISD appreciates DOE’s support.

➤ Jeremy Hawk, Director of Operations & Chief Financial Officer

- The ability for ISD to purchase items has always been an issue but due to the help and cooperation from IDOA, DOE, ISDH and SBA ISD was able to free up funds to purchase items needed to keep everyone safe. We continue to have good relations and connections with IDOA. The Commissioner of IDOA called to make sure ISD had what it needed.
- We continue to look at inventory to ensure we have enough items on hand.
- Labor force in Maintenance Dept. is still low and we continue to have difficulty filling skilled (plumber, electrician) positions. Will need to use contractors to replace water fountains with contactless bottle fillers.

V. **Old Business:** None

VI. **New Business:** None

VII. **Public comments:** None

VIII. **Board comments:**

- Mr. Leffler: ISD's enrollment is less than in previous years. Does anyone know why the number is so low? Is it due to COVID or other issues?
 - Kim Kause: We believe COVID is related to two or three families, some families moved out of state, some chose to attend school closer to home, and some families have not decided whether to return to ISD.
- Rep. Clere: What is the expectation for the October meeting? Will it be virtual or in-person?
 - Chairperson DiBenedetto: The plan is to meet in person. The Board will meet in a gymnasium practicing social distancing and face coverings. The Board usually has lunch before the October meeting in the 1200 Club Diner, but since the Diner is closed the meeting will be at 4:30pm (Executive Session) and 5:00pm (Public Session).

IX. **Next meeting:** October 20, 2020 at 5:00 p.m., ISD Media Center

X. **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned by Chairperson DiBenedetto at 5:30 p.m.