

**INDIAN HILL EXEMPTED VILLAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
MINUTES
Organizational/Regular Meeting of January 11, 2022**

A regular meeting of the Indian Hill Exempted Village School District was held on Tuesday, January 11, 2022, at 6:30 p.m., in the Indian Hill High School Auditorium, 6865 Drake Road, Cincinnati, OH 45243 in accordance with notices sent to each member. The meeting was called to order by Mrs. Aichholz, presiding at 6:33 p.m. and roll call showed the following members as present:

Mrs. Aichholz Mr. Marx Mrs. Singh
 Mr. Sumerel Mr. Tullis

Also present were Kirk Koennecke, Melissa Stewart, Jim Nichols, Mick Davis, Jennifer Butler, Heather Higdon, Eric Cimini, Mike Dietz, Rachel Katz, Li Wang, Trishan Arul, Megan Seaman-Kossmeyer, Neve Seaman-Kossmeyer, James Kong, and others.

ADOPTION OF REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA (012202) – Mr. Tullis moved, seconded by Mr. Marx, to adopt the agenda of the regular business meeting of the Indian Hill Board of Education. All members present voted aye. Motion carried.

EXECUTIVE SESSION (012203) – Mr. Tullis moved, seconded by Mr. Marx, to move into Executive Session at 6:34 p.m. In accordance with O.R.C. 121.22(G) – (1): To consider the appointment of a public official (Board President).

Roll call vote was as follows:

Mrs. Aichholz, aye Mr. Marx, aye Mrs. Singh, aye
 Mr. Sumerel, aye Mr. Tullis, aye

Also present in Executive Session was Dr. Stewart, Mr. Koennecke, Mr. Nichols, and Mr. Davis. Executive Session concluded at 6:54 p.m.

The Board recessed the regular meeting at 6:54 p.m.

The Organizational Meeting of the Indian Hill Exempted Village School District was held on Tuesday, January 11, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. in the Indian Hill High School Auditorium, 6865 Drake Road, Cincinnati, OH 45243 in accordance with notices sent to each member. The meeting was called to order by Mrs. Aichholz, presiding at 7:00 p.m. and roll call showed the following members as present:

Mrs. Aichholz Mr. Marx Mrs. Singh
 Mr. Sumerel Mr. Tullis

Also present were Kirk Koennecke, Melissa Stewart, Jim Nichols, Mick Davis, Jennifer Butler, Heather Higdon, Eric Cimini, Mike Dietz, Rachel Katz, Li Wang, Trishan Arul, Megan Seaman-Kossmeyer, Neve Seaman-Kossmeyer, James Kong, and others.

ADOPTION OF ORGANIZATIONAL BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA (012204) – Mr. Marx moved, seconded by Mr. Sumerel, to adopt the agenda of the organizational business meeting of the Indian Hill Board of Education. All members present voted aye. Motion carried.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS - PRESIDENT - Mrs. Singh nominated Bear Tullis to serve as President of the Indian Hill Exempted Village School District Board of Education during calendar year 2022. Upon receiving no further nominations, Mrs. Aichholz closed nominations for President of the Indian Hill Exempted Village School District Board of Education. Mrs. Aichholz, Mrs. Singh, Mr. Marx, Mr. Sumerel, and Mr. Tullis answered in the affirmative for Mr. Tullis to serve as President of the Indian Hill Exempted Village School District Board of Education during calendar year 2022.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS - VICE-PRESIDENT - Mr. Marx nominated Mrs. Aichholz to serve as Vice-President of the Indian Hill Exempted Village School District Board of Education during calendar year 2022. Upon receiving no further nominations, Mr. Tullis closed nominations for Vice-President of Finance of the Indian Hill Exempted Village School District Board of Education. Mrs. Aichholz, Mrs. Singh, Mr. Marx, Mr. Sumerel, and Mr. Tullis answered in the affirmative for Mrs. Aichholz to serve as Vice-President of the Indian Hill Exempted Village School District Board of Education during calendar year 2022.

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RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH POSITION BONDS FOR BOARD PRESIDENT, SUPERINTENDENT AND TREASURER (012205)

- Mrs. Aichholz moved, seconded by Mr. Marx, to instruct the Treasurer to secure a faithful performance bond for the Board President, Superintendent and Treasurer in the amount of \$20,000, payable to the State of Ohio, with surety. Roll call vote was as follows:

Mrs. Aichholz, aye	Mr. Marx, aye	Mrs. Singh, aye
Mr. Sumerel, aye	Mr. Tullis, aye	

RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH DATES, TIMES, PLACES OF MEETINGS DURING 2022 (012206)

- Mrs. Aichholz moved, seconded by Mr. Marx, to establish the following dates for Board of Education meetings during 2022 to be held at 6:30 p.m. in the Indian Hill High School Auditorium, 6865 Drake Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45243. The Board may, in the event it is necessary, schedule a possible executive session to begin promptly at 6:30 p.m. The business portion of the Regular Board meeting will not begin until, at the earliest, 7:00 p.m. In the event the Board does not require an executive session, the Board will open the meeting at 6:30 p.m. and recess the meeting until 7:00 p.m. In such instances, the business portion of the meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m. The public will be notified of the starting time of any such session upon release of the agenda in the event a modification of the start time is required. In no circumstance will the business portion of the meeting begin until 7:00 p.m.

February 8, 2022	September 20, 2022
March 8, 2022	October 18, 2022
April 12, 2022	November 15, 2022
May 17, 2022	December 13, 2022
June 28, 2022	January 10, 2023 (Organizational & Regular)
August 16, 2022	January 11, 2023 (Alternate date for Organizational Meeting in case of inclement weather)

Roll call vote was as follows:

Mrs. Aichholz, aye	Mr. Marx, aye	Mrs. Singh, aye
Mr. Sumerel, aye	Mr. Tullis, aye	

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SIGNING OF ALL CHECKS BY TREASURER ONLY (012207) - Mrs. Aichholz moved, seconded by Mr. Marx, to authorize the signature of the Treasurer only on all checks, warrants, stop payments and other negotiable orders of withdrawal during calendar year 2022. Roll call vote was as follows:

Mrs. Aichholz, aye	Mr. Marx, aye	Mrs. Singh, aye
Mr. Sumerel, aye	Mr. Tullis, aye	

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE INVESTMENT OF FUNDS (012208) - Mrs. Aichholz moved, seconded by Mr. Marx, to authorize the Treasurer to invest the funds of the District in accordance with Board Policy and legal constraints and instruct the Treasurer to submit an Investment Report for Board approval on a monthly basis during calendar year 2022. Roll call vote was as follows:

Mrs. Aichholz, aye	Mr. Marx, aye	Mrs. Singh, aye
Mr. Sumerel, aye	Mr. Tullis, aye	

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TREASURER/SUPERINTENDENT TO ENTER INTO CONTRACTS LESS THAN \$25,000 SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATIONS AND WITHOUT FURTHER BOARD ACTION (012209)

Mrs. Aichholz moved, seconded by Mr. Marx, to authorize the Treasurer/Superintendent to enter into contracts less than \$25,000 subject to appropriations and without further action by the Board for calendar year 2022. Roll call vote was as follows:

Mrs. Aichholz, aye	Mr. Marx, aye	Mrs. Singh, aye
Mr. Sumerel, aye	Mr. Tullis, aye	

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RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH BOARD SERVICE FUND (012210) - Mrs. Aichholz moved, seconded by Mr. Marx, to establish a Service Fund in the amount of \$2,000 to pay for the expenses actually incurred by members of the Board of Education in the performance of their duties and expenses of members-elect actually incurred in connection with their training and orientation to their duties before taking office. Roll call vote was as follows:

Mrs. Aichholz, aye Mr. Marx, aye Mrs. Singh, aye
 Mr. Sumerel, aye Mr. Tullis, aye

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PROFESSIONAL MEETING LEAVES (012211) - Mrs. Aichholz moved, seconded by Mr. Marx, to authorize the attendance of the Superintendent and/or Treasurer at any regional and State professional meetings and provide reimbursement for expenses incurred upon submission of proper documentation in accordance with Board policy. Roll call vote was as follows:

Mrs. Aichholz, aye Mr. Marx, aye Mrs. Singh, aye
 Mr. Sumerel, aye Mr. Tullis, aye

RESOLUTION TO APPOINT TREASURER TO SERVE AS DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE ON THE TAX INCENTIVE REVIEW COUNCIL (012212) - Mrs. Aichholz moved, seconded by Mr. Marx, to appoint Treasurer to serve as district representative on the Tax Incentive Review Council. Roll call vote was as follows:

Mrs. Aichholz, aye Mr. Marx, aye Mrs. Singh, aye
 Mr. Sumerel, aye Mr. Tullis, aye

RESOLUTION TO APPOINT TREASURER TO RECEIVE PUBLIC RECORDS TRAINING ON BEHALF OF BOARD MEMBERS (012213) - Mrs. Aichholz moved, seconded by Mr. Marx, to appoint Treasurer to receive public records training on behalf of Board members. Roll call vote was as follows:

Mrs. Aichholz, aye Mr. Marx, aye Mrs. Singh, aye
 Mr. Sumerel, aye Mr. Tullis, aye

RESOLUTION TO APPOINT SUPERINTENDENT OR HIS DESIGNEE AS BOARD DESIGNEE FOR SUSPENSION APPEALS (012214) - Mrs. Aichholz moved, seconded by Mr. Marx, to appoint Superintendent or his designee as Board designee for suspension appeals. Roll call vote was as follows:

Mrs. Aichholz, aye Mr. Marx, aye Mrs. Singh, aye
 Mr. Sumerel, aye Mr. Tullis, aye

RESOLUTION TO APPOINT SUPERINTENDENT TO ACCEPT RESIGNATIONS UPON RECEIPT (012215) - Mrs. Aichholz moved, seconded by Mr. Marx, to appoint Superintendent to accept resignations upon receipt. Roll call vote was as follows:

Mrs. Aichholz, aye Mr. Marx, aye Mrs. Singh, aye
 Mr. Sumerel, aye Mr. Tullis, aye

2022 BOARD COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS – Mr. Tullis made the following committee appointments for calendar year 2022:

Instruction and Technology	Niki Singh*, Nolan Marx
Operations	Bear Tullis*, Niki Singh
Professional Relations/Personnel	Nolan Marx*, Craig Sumerel
Finance/Audit	Craig Sumerel*, Nancy Aichholz
Legislative Liaison	Bear Tullis
Indian Hill Public Schools Foundation Liaison	Bear Tullis

* Denotes Committee Chairperson

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ADJOURNMENT (012216) Mrs. Aichholz moved, seconded by Mr. Sumerel, to adjourn the Organizational Meeting of the Indian Hill Board of Education at 7:07 p.m. Roll call vote was as follows:

Mrs. Aichholz, aye	Mr. Marx, aye	Mrs. Singh, aye
Mr. Sumerel, aye	Mr. Tullis, aye	

Mr. Tullis reconvened the Regular meeting at 7:07 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Superintendent Koennecke led the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTARY –

Rachel Katz discussed the mask policy.

Li Wang discussed the mask policy.

Trishan Arul discussed the mask policy. Mr. Arul submitted the following for inclusion in the minutes as part of public commentary;

Public Comment at 1/11/22 IH School Board Meeting
My name is Trishan Arul, I have a child in Primary and another in Elementary school.

I'm not going to repeat the facts, the statistics, and other comments about COVID transmission, case counts, and hospitalizations. That should have been obvious to everyone before today. From the experience in other countries, we know that omicron's massive spike in cases will likely burn itself out quickly. It's already starting to happen. This new mask policy is too little, too late. I'm here to ask why and request accountability to make better decisions next time.

Let's start with what should be indisputable:

FIRST: the job of the School Board & Administration is to provide the best education for our children with the taxes of Indian Hill residents.

SECOND: children learn better in person, in a classroom with their teachers & peers so we need to keep kids in school.

THIRD: Quarantined teachers can't teach, quarantined students can't properly learn, and if enough of them are sick, everything falls apart.

CONCLUSION: children, teachers, and staff need to minimize the risk of being infected with COVID for the District to do it's job

Let's move on to some facts:

Families were going to travel & gather over the holidays. Even before omicron became dominant, delta was widespread and all these people gathering for the holidays would result in significant numbers of people being exposed and infected. And all of them were going to be coming back to school in January and spreading COVID.

So, I want to ask:

Why wait until now to do what should have been obvious long before the holiday break?

Why was the hospital association guidance from December ignored until now?

Why was the emerging data that omicron was the dominant variant and was able to evade vaccine induced immunity ignored?

Why were the daily health check-ins stopped?

We KNEW that this would happen, we KNEW that we could significantly reduce transmission with universal masking, and yet here we are. We didn't need to institute masks indefinitely, just for a few weeks after the holidays. Yet we didn't. WHY?

Many families, including ours, chose to move to Indian Hill because it was ranked as the best school district in the state. In fact, the District was a leader in providing safe education during the pandemic. Thank you all for making that happen. Now the District is the last in the area to react. How did we get here?

If we're unable to properly gather data, unable to make informed decisions, unable to take in new information and react to changing conditions, what are we teaching our children? How long will the District remain ranked #1 if we can't properly educate our children?

Neve Seaman-Kossmeyer discussed the mask policy.

Megan Seaman-Kossmeyer discussed the mask policy.

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Melissa Chen submitted the following for inclusion in the minutes as part of public commentary;

SUBJECT: Grave concern and request for your leadership

I would like my response to Mr. Koennecke's email included for the record of January's Board Meeting. See below:

Mr. Koennecke,

I appreciate you clarifying that you are solely responsible at this point for the decision regarding the safety of my children in school beginning after December 17th and that this is not a board decision, but rather yours.

So, you've decided to ignore the plea from our state's Children's Hospitals? You've decided to ignore the plea from the Governor's request for schools to mask? You've decided to ignore the CDC's updated recommendation for universal masking for children in schools over the age of 2 (so, K-12)?

What are your qualifications as a Public Health Expert that would supersede multiple societies/institutions of medically and epidemiologically trained personnel? - such as:

CDC
American Academy of Pediatrics
Ohio Children's Hospitals Association
OSHA
Our own Cincinnati Children's Hospital!!! (we ignore them, really?)
etc.
etc.

All of these groups advocate for the importance of in-person learning with masking being key to sustaining that - especially right now. I am not advocating for all year masking, but rather paying attention to current spikes and masking right now for the next 2 weeks and then review the data. This closed minded approach you have taken does not give the impression that you are reviewing and willing to update policy based on current information. The information that the board had when it made its decision was very different from the information we have right now. Today you have reported 22 positive cases for the last 3 days. I believe that puts us over 30 for the last 7 days. You are making this decision. Any difficulty ahead is solely on your shoulders. While other schools are moving to protect in-person learning, you are leaving us open for closure.

So, can you please share the specific data you are referencing to make this "informed" decision for our District? Especially since the Dashboard has been paused for Holiday Break?

Your description of my disposition as "disappointed" is inaccurate. I would prefer to stick to data. This is not emotion, this is reality.

Melissa Chen

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SUBJECT: Grave concern and request for your leadership

Please add this emailed letter to the Board of Education minutes of the January meeting. I would also like to request a response to my questions within the letter.

On countless occasions when addressing the community, Mr. Koennecke has stated when faced with a tough decision, he would err on the side of safety. I am hoping for clarity on who the deciding party is regarding current safety measures (masking, etc.) with consideration for the below. Is it Mr. Koennecke or our Board of Education?

1. Hyper-contagious variant (along with other winter illnesses) is rampant and has caused many businesses to close or reduce hours, airlines to cancel flights, the Governor to call in the National Guard, etc. etc.
2. We are coming off of our holiday break where untold numbers of families have been traversing the country potentially picking up this or other strains of the virus (or flu, etc.).
3. Hospitals are being overrun by all kinds of sickness and are desperate for help, pleading with our Superintendents and School Boards to have students mask:

Ohio Children's Hospital Association asks K-12 schools to require kids wear masks - cleveland.com

4. The spread is actually the highest it has ever been:

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Ohio Department of Health posts 20,320 new coronavirus cases Wednesday, largest single-day record - cleveland.com

5. Universities (like University of Michigan) are remaining virtual until this current spread decreases.

BUT.....the leadership at our school district has decided to reduce safety measures at this critical time??? And, it appears you know this decision is wrong, since you are choosing to make a change and hide data from the community by stopping the COVID emails. Interesting decision.

Mr. Koennecke's signature says that he is in service to "Our Children". But, it is actually my children who are being serviced by this school district. These changes seem contradictory to his signature mission. Is the focus of these actions the safety of the children of this community? I am struggling to understand why we would make a change when things are at their worst, rather than just simply waiting a few more weeks until things settle. What is the agenda that is driving this decision? True leaders are able to course-correct when new information presents itself.

Can someone please tell me who is accountable for deciding what happens tomorrow (mask vs. no-mask)? Is this the Superintendent alone or the Board of Education collectively?

I implore you to rally your collective courage while there is still time to prevent school closure or worse.

Sincerely,

Melissa Chen

Katy Fraser submitted the following for inclusion in the minutes as part of public commentary;

Dear Dr. Hooker, Ms. Lewis, Ms. Singh, Ms. Aichholz, Ms. Johnston, Mr. Koennecke, Mr. Davis, and Ms. Hoyer, As a mother and medical professional, I am writing to request a short-term, temporary reconsideration of the mask optional mandate. I also kindly request a response from the recipients to know they have received and read my request and to have this added to the information for the next BOE meeting.

This is a highly controversial and polarizing topic for many people. Unfortunately, the mask has come to symbolize political views, freedom choices, religious affiliations, and scientific opinions. I realize for every note like mine you receive notes from people of an opposite opinion. I appreciate that none of this is easy. For you, for the educators and staff, for parents, but most importantly for the children. And I know in my heart that we all have the same common goal focused on the safety and wellbeing of the children in this community and beyond.

The decision to make masks optional was made at a different point in time where cases were lower and the hyper-contagious variant was not a consideration. I wanted to share some points for your consideration.

-The children, faculty and staff are familiar with masking. Maintaining it temporarily during this surge and then removing it would be less chaotic and efficient than re-requiring masking. A forced virtual learning would be even worse than wearing masks, as we know in-person learning is best for most children.

-Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center (CCHMC) has at least 30 children currently admitted for COVID treatment. This may not seem like a large number, but in terms of pediatric hospital data and metrics...it is. Considerably larger than it has been to date and causing concern.

-Due to the surge in cases and what they are seeing in community spread, CCHMC is:

-mandating a decrease in elective surgeries and admissions by 50% due to COVID

-converting approximately 50% of outpatient visits to virtual due to COVID

-Restaurants (like Boca) are canceling reservations because their staff is ill with Covid and cannot accommodate guests

-Booster availability. For the 12-15 year old group, they may have waning immunity without access to a booster based on recent data.

-Case count is the highest it has been in the pandemic with experts stating that the peak is weeks away.

-Summit has reinstated their mask requirement. 7Hills and CCDS are still requiring masking for all.

-7Hills has purchased testing equipment to make it easier for children to test and keep the community safe. This is particularly important if you are basing quarantines off of a positive (not home) test.

Nearly every day of break, there has been at least one COVID case (yesterday there were 8). While I realize you are focused on our local data, we are part of a larger community. Some families have children at multiple schools, some children play sports on traveling teams, most families have an adult working outside of their home and mixing with other adults from multiple communities, and many of those employed by IH School District do not live in the local community. My point being, local IH data is somewhat irrelevant if not reviewed in conjunction with the broader Cincinnati Community.

A few questions:

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- How will teachers monitor which children are required to securely wear their masks due to being COVID positive 5 days prior (new cdc guidelines)?
- How will teachers monitor which children need to wear their masks due to an exposure for 10 days (new cdc guidelines)?
- For younger children, if their parents have chosen for them to wear a mask, will the teacher be monitoring this?
- Shelley Hoyer. We have received messages requesting medical information and about medical plans from Mr. Koenneke and the board. Would it be possible to hear from Shelley Hoyer?
- Will you be specifying the types of masks people/students are wearing when they return after being positive 5 days prior? The CDC specifies this in their guidelines. A number of students wear gaiters which have been highlighted as not being effective. Gaiters do not appear to follow CDC guidelines, but I did not see mention of that in the new rules sent out by Mr. Koennecke.
- With the difficulty in obtaining PCR testing due to surge, if you have symptoms that are unconfirmed but begin to resolve after 5 days, can you return to school with a mask (regardless of whether you received a test result)? Also, the guidelines say from the date of positive test, not the start of symptoms. Is the school stating that PCR testing is required for anyone with any potential symptoms? And if so, what if you cannot get a test for days?

We cannot mask and bubble forever. Everyone is exhausted and we all want this to be behind us. Please know that I fully agree. However, please consider what is happening at this moment and the opportunity to be proactive vs. reactive. This is incredibly hard, but I believe in each of you and in our community. We can do hard things together, knowing that we will be stronger and that this is temporary.

I did not have the emails (and could not find them online) for the incoming board members. If you share with me, I am happy to include them in this email, but did not know what was appropriate during this transitional time.

With the surge in Covid case count, advice from medical experts, Holiday mingling, waning immunity and extremely contagious variant I humbly and hopefully request a temporary, short term mask reinstatement until this surge subsides.

Thank you and I look forward to hearing your responses,
Katy

Heather Ravvin McKee submitted the following for inclusion in the minutes as part of public commentary;

Dear Superintendent Koennecke,

The IHEVSD's Covid numbers are approaching that of the worst weeks from early 2021. These numbers are increasing every single day according to the dashboard. IH parents are concerned for health and safety of their children, and no one knows at what point, if any, you will re-evaluate its mask-optional policy.

In addition to the rising numbers of cases in the IHEVSD, more than 1000 kids in the Cincinnati area have officially tested positive for COVID in the past week. This doesn't count those who have tested positive with in-home tests, those who have become ill and just assumed they had Covid, or those who could not get access to testing. 25% (or more) of these kids will go onto have Long Covid (that's roughly 250) and some of these kids will have MIS-C in about a month.

Our local hospitals are filling up and are facing critical staffing shortages. This includes Cincinnati Children's Hospital which has admitted about 50 kids in the past week. Both the number of kids testing positive and the number of pediatric hospitalizations are double what was seen in the previous week and those were double what was seen the week before that. With our mask-optional policy, we are failing to do our part to protect the health and safety of our children as well as failing to help our area medical and healthcare professionals, as they tirelessly care for those who need them.

Many schools in our area are making the difficult decision to reinstate universal masking. Some are deciding to delay the start of the next term, and some are facing the decision of whether to close due to the high number of students, teachers, and staff testing positive. It continues to be a challenge understanding how a school district that prides itself on being a leader could choose to be turning a blind eye to science and the recommendations and pleas of local and national governing bodies, regulatory agencies, and professional organizations.

We have a growing number of students facing waning immunity. Thankfully, the CDC and FDA have both approved the use of booster doses for these students, but they are currently under-vaccinated, at risk, and the number of positive cases is rising faster than in any building. While public health professionals, epidemiologists, and virologists are all emphasizing that adequate vaccination is the primary way out of this pandemic, it alone will not achieve this. We continue to need a layered approach to control the spread and decrease the burden on our healthcare systems. A temporary return to universal masking achieves both of these things as well as protecting the health and safety of our children, teachers, and staff.

With the current mask-optional policy in the IHEVSD, we are not taking care of our children, our Indian Hill community, or the larger community that surrounds us as well as we should. We are also not helping our local medical providers and hospitals, who are exhausted and overwhelmed. We, as a community, should, and need to do better. In order to do better, we

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need to temporarily reinstate universal masking until the number of Covid positive cases declines and the burden on our hospitals and medical systems eases.

Please help us take care of ourselves and others and keep children and teachers in school.

Sincerely,

Heather Ravvin McKee, MD

Jaime Zender submitted the following for inclusion in the minutes as part of public commentary;

Please enter the following letter into the public record for the next board meeting.

January 5, 2022

Dear Superintendent Koennecke,

The IHEVSD's Covid numbers are approaching that of the worst weeks from early 2021. These numbers are increasing every single day according to the dashboard. There are a growing number of IH parents concerned for health and safety of their children, and no one knows at what point, if any, you will re-evaluate its mask-optional policy. Equally concerning, no one knows what criteria or what metrics you will use if and when you do decide to re-evaluate the decision.

In addition to the rising numbers of cases in the IHEVSD, more than 1000 kids in the Cincinnati area have officially tested positive for COVID in the past week. This doesn't count those who have tested positive with in-home tests, those who have become ill and just assumed they had Covid, or those who could not get access to testing. 25% (or more) of these kids will go onto have Long Covid (that's roughly 250) and some of these kids will have MIS-C in about a month.

Our local hospitals are filling up and are facing critical staffing shortages. This includes Cincinnati Children's Hospital which has admitted about 50 kids in the past week. Both the number of kids testing positive and the number of pediatric hospitalizations are double what was seen in the previous week and those were double what was seen the week before that. With our mask-optional policy, we are failing to do our part to protect the health and safety of our children as well as failing to help our area medical and healthcare professionals, as they tirelessly care for those who need them.

Many schools in our area are making the difficult decision to reinstate universal masking. Some are deciding to delay the start of the next term, and some are facing the decision of whether to close due to the high number of students, teachers, and staff testing positive. It continues to be a challenge understanding how a school district that prides itself on being a leader could choose to be turning a blind eye to science and the recommendations and pleas of local and national governing bodies, regulatory agencies, and professional organizations.

We have a growing number of students facing waning immunity. Thankfully, the CDC and FDA have both approved the use of booster doses for these students, but they are currently under-vaccinated, at risk, and the number of positive cases is rising faster than in any building. While public health professionals, epidemiologists, and virologists are all emphasizing that adequate vaccination is the primary way out of this pandemic, it alone will not achieve this. We continue to need a layered approach to control the spread and decrease the burden on our healthcare systems. A temporary return to universal masking achieves both of these things as well as protecting the health and safety of our children, teachers, and staff.

With the current mask-optional policy in the IHEVSD, we are not taking care of our children, our Indian Hill community, or the larger community that surrounds us as well as we should. We are also not helping our local medical providers and hospitals, who are exhausted and overwhelmed. We, as a community, should, and need to do better. In order to do better, we need to temporarily reinstate universal masking until the number of Covid positive cases declines and the burden on our hospitals and medical systems eases.

Please help us take care of others.

Sincerely,

Jaime Zender, Mother of 3 IH students and public health supporter

Pure Pilates Cincinnati, LLC.

James Kong discussed the mask policy. Dr. Kong submitted the following for inclusion in the minutes as part of public commentary;

Subject: Please enter the following letter into the public record for the next board meeting

Please enter the following letter into the public record for the next board meeting

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January 5, 2022

Dear Superintendent Koennecke, Members of the Board, and Principals of the IHEVSD,

The IHEVSD's Covid numbers are approaching that of the worst weeks from early 2021. These numbers are increasing every single day according to the dashboard. There are a growing number of IH parents concerned for health and safety of their children, and no one knows at what point, if any, you will re-evaluate its mask-optional policy. Equally concerning, no one knows what criteria or what metrics you will use if and when you do decide to re-evaluate the decision.

In addition to the rising numbers of cases in the IHEVSD, more than 1000 kids in the Cincinnati area have officially tested positive for COVID in the past week. This doesn't count those who have tested positive with in-home tests, those who have become ill and just assumed they had Covid, or those who could not get access to testing. 25% (or more) of these kids will go onto have Long Covid (that's roughly 250) and some of these kids will have MIS-C in about a month.

Our local hospitals are filling up and are facing critical staffing shortages. This includes Cincinnati Children's Hospital which has admitted about 50 kids in the past week. Both the number of kids testing positive and the number of pediatric hospitalizations are double what was seen in the previous week and those were double what was seen the week before that. With our mask-optional policy, we are failing to do our part to protect the health and safety of our children as well as failing to help our area medical and healthcare professionals, as they tirelessly care for those who need them.

Many schools in our area are making the difficult decision to reinstate universal masking. Some are deciding to delay the start of the next term, and some are facing the decision of whether to close due to the high number of students, teachers, and staff testing positive. It continues to be a challenge understanding how a school district that prides itself on being a leader could choose to be turning a blind eye to science and the recommendations and pleas of local and national governing bodies, regulatory agencies, and professional organizations.

We have a growing number of students facing waning immunity. Thankfully, the CDC and FDA have both approved the use of booster doses for these students, but they are currently under-vaccinated, at risk, and the number of positive cases is rising faster than in any building. While public health professionals, epidemiologists, and virologists are all emphasizing that adequate vaccination is the primary way out of this pandemic, it alone will not achieve this. We continue to need a layered approach to control the spread and decrease the burden on our healthcare systems. A temporary return to universal masking achieves both of these things as well as protecting the health and safety of our children, teachers, and staff.

With the current mask-optional policy in the IHEVSD, we are not taking care of our children, our Indian Hill community, or the larger community that surrounds us as well as we should. We are also not helping our local medical providers and hospitals, who are exhausted and overwhelmed. We, as a community, should, and need to do better. In order to do better, we need to temporarily reinstate universal masking until the number of Covid positive cases declines and the burden on our hospitals and medical systems eases.

Please help us take care of others.

We are not asking for an end to in-person learning, we know our kids need to be in school

We are not asking for anyone to endanger themselves personally, my health care colleagues and I are already doing this so others don't have to

We are asking every person to do everything they can to help themselves, each other, and our community out of this pandemic. We don't each live in a vacuum. We all live together and what everyone does affects everyone else.

Sincerely,

James Kong, MD

-

Subject: I know it when I see it

Please enter the following letter into the public record for the next board meeting

I know it when I see it

In 1964 Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart famously tried to explain "hard core" pornography by saying "I know it when I see it." His statement implies that even when something is hard to define, there are unmistakable characteristics that a reasonable person would recognize. From another perspective, however, the statement's implications are quite different; his statement also implies that individual judgement can obviate the need for clear definitions on a subject, ignoring objectivity, allowing subjectivity, and "Calling it like I see it."

INDIAN HILL EXEMPTED VILLAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT MINUTES - January 11, 2022

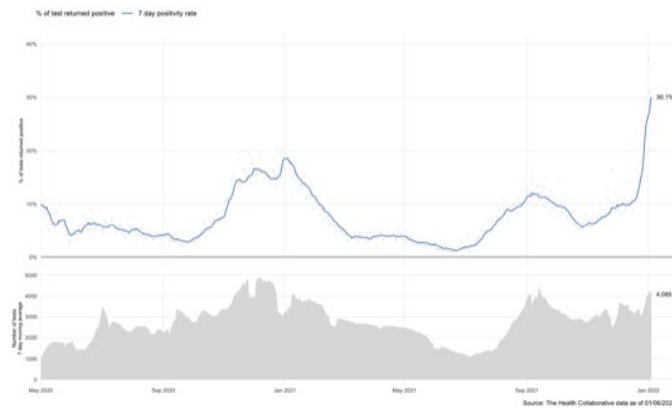
And so in 2022, twenty months into the COVID 19 pandemic, we find ourselves arguing over what we are “seeing” from SARS CoV 2 in our area. Why is this important? Correctly recognizing dangerous pandemic conditions in our community is critical to informing our mitigation strategy. It is necessary for us to “see” so that we can “act” to keep our kids safe and in school.

Applying the standard of “I know it when I see it.”

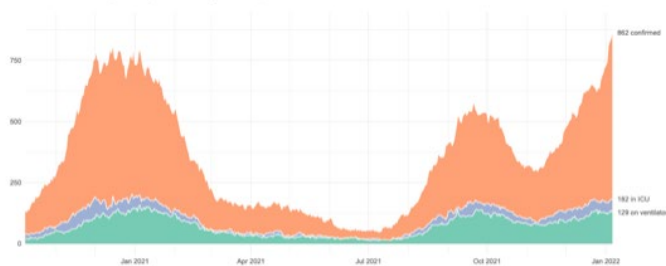
What would a reasonable person “see” through the following observations:

- Test positivity is 30% in our area, 34% for ages 5-17
- There are 862 people hospitalized in the region, exceeding the peak of hospitalizations during the surge in January 2021
- The R value is > 1 , consistent with the current exponential growth of cases

Percentage of test results returned positive in 14 county region



Number of COVID positive patients in Region 6 hospitals



<https://www.cctst.org/covid19>

Even without scientific training, a reasonable person can “see” that SARS-CoV-2 is spreading uncontrollably in our area.

Moving beyond “Calling it like I see it”

Fortunately, in December 2021 the IHEVSD Board published criteria to help us understand what we would see as COVID pandemic conditions change. Not satisfying these criteria would warrant intensifying mitigation strategies. These are reviewed on January 6, 2022 by Jennifer Creedon-Harris in a letter to the Board and summarized here (where data are not available, the criterion is not satisfied. Key: ✓ satisfied, ✗ not satisfied):

**INDIAN HILL EXEMPTED VILLAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
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Criteria	Faculty	Grade k-7	Grade 8-12
>80% population vaccinated	✓	✗	✗
<1% case load	✗	✗	✗
<5% quarantine	✗	✗	✗

Clearly, according to the criteria defined by the Board, pandemic conditions meet the criteria to intensify mitigation strategies; this includes Universal Masking.

Despite the clear worsening of local conditions, the IHEVSD Board has not issued any changes to our mitigation strategies. If the District fails to act according to its own criteria, what are we to conclude about policy making at the Board level? To our local community, it appears this is part “Calling this like I see it,” and an inversion of “Do as I say, not as I do”: the Board sees what it wants to see, ignores what it says it will do, and instead acts in the opposite way a reasonable person would expect. To the community at large, it seems that we are not following the advice of our state and local health officials, our governor, or our own rules. I call on the Board to open its eyes and see the dire state that we are in throughout the region. If you feel stuck, it’s okay—you can change course now. It’s time to know. It’s time to act.

Jennifer Creedon submitted the following for inclusion in the minutes as part of public commentary;

Please enter the following letter into the public record for the next board meeting.

January 5, 2022

Dear Superintendent Koennecke,

The IHEVSD’s Covid numbers are approaching that of the worst weeks from early 2021. These numbers are increasing every single day according to the dashboard. There are a growing number of IH parents concerned for health and safety of their children, and no one knows at what point, if any, you will re-evaluate its mask-optional policy. Equally concerning, no one knows what criteria or what metrics you will use if and when you do decide to re-evaluate the decision.

In addition to the rising numbers of cases in the IHEVSD, more than 1000 kids in the Cincinnati area have officially tested positive for COVID in the past week. This doesn’t count those who have tested positive with in-home tests, those who have become ill and just assumed they had Covid, or those who could not get access to testing. 25% (or more) of these kids will go onto have Long Covid (that’s roughly 250) and some of these kids will have MIS-C in about a month.

Our local hospitals are filling up and are facing critical staffing shortages. This includes Cincinnati Children’s Hospital which has admitted about 50 kids in the past week. Both the number of kids testing positive and the number of pediatric hospitalizations are double what was seen in the previous week and those were double what was seen the week before that. With our mask-optional policy, we are failing to do our part to protect the health and safety of our children as well as failing to help our area medical and healthcare professionals, as they tirelessly care for those who need them.

Many schools in our area are making the difficult decision to reinstate universal masking. Some are deciding to delay the start of the next term, and some are facing the decision of whether to close due to the high number of students, teachers, and staff testing positive. It continues to be a challenge understanding how a school district that prides itself on being a leader could choose to be turning a blind eye to science and the recommendations and pleas of local and national governing bodies, regulatory agencies, and professional organizations.

We have a growing number of students facing waning immunity. Thankfully, the CDC and FDA have both approved the use of booster doses for these students, but they are currently under-vaccinated, at risk, and the number of positive cases is rising faster than in any building. While public health professionals, epidemiologists, and virologists are all emphasizing that adequate vaccination is the primary way out of this pandemic, it alone will not achieve this. We continue to need a layered approach to control the spread and decrease the burden on our healthcare systems. A temporary return to universal masking achieves both of these things as well as protecting the health and safety of our children, teachers, and staff.

With the current mask-optional policy in the IHEVSD, we are not taking care of our children, our Indian Hill community, or the larger community that surrounds us as well as we should. We are also not helping our local medical providers and hospitals, who are exhausted and overwhelmed. We, as a community, should, and need to do better. In order to do better, we need to temporarily reinstate universal masking until the number of Covid positive cases declines and the burden on our hospitals and medical systems eases.

Please help us take care of others.

**INDIAN HILL EXEMPTED VILLAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
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Sincerely,

Jennifer Creedon, Ph.D

Gayle Wiedamann submitted the following for inclusion in the minutes as part of public commentary;
January 5, 2022

Dear Superintendent Koennecke,

The IHEVSD's Covid numbers are approaching that of the worst weeks from early 2021. These numbers are increasing every single day according to the dashboard. There are a growing number of IH parents concerned for health and safety of their children, and no one knows at what point, if any, you will re-evaluate its mask-optional policy. Equally concerning, no one knows what criteria or what metrics you will use if and when you do decide to re-evaluate the decision.

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Our local hospitals are filling up and are facing critical staffing shortages. This includes Cincinnati Children's Hospital which has admitted about 50 kids in the past week. Both the number of kids testing positive and the number of pediatric hospitalizations are double what was seen in the previous week and those were double what was seen the week before that. With our mask-optional policy, we are failing to do our part to protect the health and safety of our children as well as failing to help our area medical and healthcare professionals, as they tirelessly care for those who need them.

Many schools in our area are making the difficult decision to reinstate universal masking. Some are deciding to delay the start of the next term, and some are facing the decision of whether to close due to the high number of students, teachers, and staff testing positive. It continues to be a challenge understanding how a school district that prides itself on being a leader could choose to be turning a blind eye to science and the recommendations and pleas of local and national governing bodies, regulatory agencies, and professional organizations.

We have a growing number of students facing waning immunity. Thankfully, the CDC and FDA have both approved the use of booster doses for these students, but they are currently under-vaccinated, at risk, and the number of positive cases is rising faster than in any building. While public health professionals, epidemiologists, and virologists are all emphasizing that adequate vaccination is the primary way out of this pandemic, it alone will not achieve this. We continue to need a layered approach to control the spread and decrease the burden on our healthcare systems. A temporary return to universal masking achieves both of these things as well as protecting the health and safety of our children, teachers, and staff.

With the current mask-optional policy in the IHEVSD, we are not taking care of our children, our Indian Hill community, or the larger community that surrounds us as well as we should. We are also not helping our local medical providers and hospitals, who are exhausted and overwhelmed. We, as a community, should, and need to do better. In order to do better, we need to temporarily reinstate universal masking until the number of Covid positive cases declines and the burden on our hospitals and medical systems eases.

Please help us take care of others.

Sincerely,

Wiedemann's

Katie Foster submitted the following for inclusion in the minutes as part of public commentary;

Dear Superintendent and BOE,

If the district is truly concerned about keeping kids in school then it will go back to universal masking for several weeks and readjust as numbers go down. My son has been forced to stay home and many others have chosen to keep their children home as well, with overwhelming consent from their doctors. No one is keeping their children home over having to wear a mask. The district is not only losing the support of parents, more importantly, it's losing respect from the community. I have been using my position on the Family Advisory Council at CCHMC to work on establishing the HS show choir a quarterly volunteer opportunity at Seacrest Studios where they can sing and have their performances broadcast to the entire hospital. There are several other areas within the hospital where we could establish fantastic opportunities for students to volunteer as well. Instead, Cincinnati Children's is painfully aware of IH's choice to not mask students and is looking at a competing local school as an alternative. I can't say I blame them. The district is not only losing opportunities for its students over this decision, but also risking their health. This is unfortunate considering those of you on staff are failing the ones you chose to serve as a profession, children. We would also appreciate you all refrain from using the words "all children" when referring

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to who you are working to assist in the district. It is offensive and untrue to the medical families in the district that have children at home instead of in school over your recent decision. We are the families that need our kids in-person the most and you are failing us. If you all were actually working for ALL children then ALL of them would be in school, not just the typical students. The plea for temporary universal masking has been requested by every hospital and hospital association in OH and the country, our governor and both state and local health departments. It is foolish to think any of you know more than the very people that have invested their lives in Healthcare and are begging for support. Once again, our family is asking you to put personal agendas aside and please actually consider the health and well-being of ALL students in the district by reinstating a temporary universal masking policy. We also ask that this email along with its attachments be added to public record since we are unable to attend the Tuesday BOE meeting because of the lack of masking. The attachments include a letter from our son's pulmonologist and the letter from the Ohio Hospital Association to all state Superintendents.

Thank you,
Katie Foster

Amanda Strong submitted the following for inclusion in the minutes as part of public commentary;

Subject: Call to reinstate Universal Masking at IHEVSD: data compared to metrics from December 2021 BOE meeting

Please enter this letter into the record for the next BOE meeting

Dear Superintendent Koennecke, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Stewart, members of the IHEVSD BOE and building principals,

During the December 14, 2021 IHEVSD BOE meeting, several metrics or guidelines were presented with the idea that they would be used as considerations in determining when changes could be made to the universal masking policy.

The Indian Hill Data Decision Factors outlined 3 targets of consideration:

- > 80% vaccinated population
- < 1% caseload (of positive COVID-19 infections)
- < 5% quarantined

With the following guidelines:

If 3/3 targets were met, then move to mask optional grades 8-12. Universal masking K-7.

If 2/3 targets were met, mask exemption option for vaccinated individuals in grades 8-12 implemented.

If 1/3 or less were met, universal masks would be required for grades 8-12.

Logically it follows that with grades 1-7 having had the opportunity to receive their vaccinations, these same parameters would be applied to these grades as well. However, before we look at how grades 1-7 and 8-12 fare on that criteria, it is important to take a deeper dive on vaccination percentages for the various groups since the data presented at the BOE meeting are spuriously high and not based on a complete data set. In order to get a more accurate percentage of vaccinated individuals, we need to take into consideration all eligible individuals as opposed to only those who responded. We must look at vaccinated individuals divided by total number of individuals in each group that are eligible for vaccination (and I use vaccinated loosely here since we now know that 2 shots is no longer considered fully vaccinated). This number is then multiplied by 100 to get the true percentage of vaccinated individuals in each of the groups evaluated (Faculty, Grades 1-7, Grades 8-12).

This formula provides a better picture of our vaccinated population:

Faculty: 80.9%

Grades 1-7: 31.8%

Grades 8-12: 71.7%

While numbers of vaccinated individuals may be higher, we do not know those true values as they have not been updated. And, per my note in parenthesis above, we must also consider the percentage of vaccinated individuals who are eligible for and have received their 3rd dose within 2 of the 3 populations.

So, based on the 3 criteria listed above and the corrected percentage rates also stated above:

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Criteria 1: > 80% of eligible population vaccinated to the FULLEST degree

Faculty: criteria met (although we have no published data regarding a 3rd dose)

Grades 8-12: criteria NOT met for 2 doses OR 3rd dose.

Grades 1-7: criteria NOT met for first 2 doses OR 3rd dose.

Criteria 2: <1% caseload (of positive COVID-19 infections)

Criteria NOT met. As of Thursday, January 6, 2022, according to the reports on the daily COVID dashboard, the caseloads are as follows:

Caseloads in grades 1-7: 3.1%

Caseloads in grades 8-12: 3.4%

****BOTH of these are well above <1%****

Unfortunately, given the new close contact policy, there is no clear data about the number of students who would be quarantined. There is also no reliable data being reported regarding total number of close contacts in the buildings. This is frustrating and reckless given that these individuals are required to wear a mask in public for 10 days REGARDLESS of vaccination status. This can be shortened to 5 days if there are no symptoms AND there is a negative PCR test on or after day 5. Without this information, there is no way to know how many of our students and faculty should be masking and there is high concern considering the prevalence of asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic spread as well as breakthrough infections. All of this should be considered.

Additionally, there were other data points to be considered as outlined in the December 14, 2021 BOE meeting. This included consideration of recommendations made by the CDC, Ohio Department of Health, HCPH, TriHealth, Cincinnati Health Collaborative and the AAP. ALL of these organizations are recommending universal masking for those 2 and older. I would provide links here as reference, however I seriously doubt they would be looked as as I know that all of these organizations are making public statements as well as reaching out to key decision makers in each district and it's clear those recommendations are being ignored here at IHEVSD.

Five other evaluation factors discussed in the 12/14 meeting include:

1. Campus numbers, percentage of reported cases (<1% needed; <3% currently) - NOT MET
2. Weekly local vaccination % demographics - Hamilton County is 59.8% vaccinated - NOT MET
3. Total local zip code case trend - 45243 and 45242 - high level cases - NOT MET
4. Total county positivity percentage - Hamilton County positivity rate is 30%. 198 new cases per 100,000 people
5. Pediatric hospitalization rates - increasing. Recommendation letter to superintendents from the OHA and OHCA - NOT MET

The RIGHT choice is not always the popular one. How can we tell our children that Braves take care of each other (a phrase right on the back of the shirts they are issued in Kindergarten!) when the adults responsible for their safety at school cannot heed the desperate call of scientists and health care professionals in the midst of a pandemic? Thank you for your time here and I will close with a portion of the letter from the OHA that was set to Superintendent Koennecke and Assistant Superintendent Dr. Stewart on Tuesday, December 28, 2021:

We know that the virus that causes COVID-19 is spread when you cough, sneeze, talk or sing. We know that masks work and are effective at slowing the spread of this virus. The best way to keep kids in school is to slow the spread of the virus. The best ways to slow the spread of the virus are to get vaccinated and wear a mask.

Our healthcare system already is taxed, with one out of every four patients in the hospital with COVID-19. We're fighting hard to save their lives, while treating other Ohioans who need our help, like children with broken bones, people suffering from strokes or those needing emergency care after a car accident. We can't do this alone. With Omicron spreading quickly through Ohio, we need everyone's help to make it through the coming weeks. Please help us by requiring students to wear masks when they return to school.

Regards,

**INDIAN HILL EXEMPTED VILLAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
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Amanda Strong

-

Subject: Call to reinstate Universal Masking at IHEVSD 1/10/22

Good afternoon all,

I begin here asking that this message be included in the record for the BOE meeting this week.

Last March my father was diagnosed with colon cancer. A cancer diagnosis in “normal” times is difficult enough to grapple with. Add to it the threat of COVID and it makes one hyper vigilant to protect their compromised loved one.

As my dad’s emergency contact and support person throughout this time, my family and I have moved through our daily lives as carefully as we can so that we can protect the most vulnerable among us. My children have opted out of participating in indoor rec sports for the last two years, they have missed spontaneous play dates with friends, the thrill of riding the bus home with their classmates, sleepovers, and so much more to avoid the risk of catching COVID and passing it to others.

Families like ours have worked incredibly hard to walk the line between caution and learning to live with this virus. We have followed the science and data presented by scientists and healthcare experts in an attempt to stay informed and prepared for whatever is to come next in this pandemic. We have, so far, stayed healthy. We have protected those in our circle who are vulnerable. Like many, we are also tired. However, despite compassion fatigue, despite a desire to return to normal, despite being gaslit by those who choose ignorance or indifference in the face of our current reality as a human race, we continue following the protocols presented by the experts in an attempt to stay safe.

With the vaccinations opening for children we were thrilled and filled with hope that our lives were headed towards normalcy for once since March 2020. That all quickly changed with the surge of Omicron in December. The vaccines my kids are eligible to have received are no longer considered effective against Omicron. Our hospitals are filling up. Healthcare workers, government agencies and officials, hospitals, etc and pleading with the public and specifically schools, to not stop their masking protocols. They have been talking directly to school superintendents and school boards to heed the call to protect one another and stop the spread through masking. Our district has blatantly ignored the facts, the science and desperate cries for help.

Our COVID positive numbers and quarantine numbers in the district rise each day. I dread opening my email in case there is a message waiting for me to say one of my children has been a close contact. I live in fear every day that we could unknowingly pass this to my dad and he must stop treatment or worse. Each day that I send my children into your buildings I hold my breath and hope that they continue to do the right thing to protect their fellow Braves. Themselves. My dad. Our family who is too young to be vaccinated.

We are better than this. We are smarter than this. How many students must be infected or sent home to worry looking for signs of illness after being exposed at school? When is it enough? Sitting idly by is clearly in service to no one. Please reconsider this stance on mask optional.

Thank you,

Amanda Strong

Sarah Hagopian submitted the following for inclusion in the minutes as part of public commentary;

Mr. Koennecke, Dr. Stewart, Mr. Davis, and IH BOE Members:

I am writing today with a personal plea that you follow the guidance of our healthcare leadership and put student & staff safety first by re-instituting a K-12 mask policy to see us through the Omicron surge.

I'd like to share my personal story of how the choice to return mask-optional has impacted our family.

We had planned to see elderly, high-risk grandparents over the Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday weekend. My children have not seen their grandparents in 7 months. Our Christmas plans to gather together had fallen through, and so we made the decision to travel to them.

My son contracted COVID this past week at school. How can I say so that definitively? Because of our upcoming travel plans, we have been taking every precaution, including limiting exposure outside the home. My son had ONLY been to school in the exposure window preceding his positive test and did not have sports or social activities outside of school. He went to school with a mask on, but many others did not. He shared with me stories of kids coming to school with "just a cold" but also unmasked. By Thursday Jan. 6th, he was positive.

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Our travel plans are now canceled. My son is missing at least 5 days of school (I say "at least" because he still feels unwell). We often talk about the mental health aspect of covid in the context of masks & precautions, but what about the impact on those who become sick? Their families? My child is stressed about catching up on schoolwork while trying to heal and recover. My family is devastated.

I submit for your review a letter dated 12/28/2021 from the Ohio Hospital Association and Ohio Children's Hospital Association, urging school superintendents, administrators, and board members to require students to wear masks when they return to school. These healthcare workers are on the front lines treating not only COVID-19 but broken bones, emergency visits, and other routine healthcare.

I'd like to highlight a portion of their letter: "Our healthcare system is already taxed, with one out of every four patients in the hospital with COVID-19.... We can't do this alone. With Omicron spreading quickly through Ohio, we need everyone's help to make it through the coming weeks. Please help us by requiring students to wear masks when they return to school." (emphasis mine)

This current mask-optional policy has failed my family.

You still have an opportunity to help other families in our District avoid a similar story.

This is the time to choose the "hard right" and lead our school district based on data, science, and best practices. Please reinstate a universal masking policy for all students, staff, and visitors in Indian Hill EVSD buildings, until this Omicron surge subsides.

I would like to request that this letter be included as public commentary for the Jan. 11th Board of Education meeting.

Respectfully,

Sarah Hagopian

Libby Beiter submitted the following for inclusion in the minutes as part of public commentary;

Me Koennecke, middle and high school principals, and members of the board,

This is appalling. 27 additional cases in the high school alone over the weekend. More than 50 district wide. How are we not mask mandatory? More than 100 students out of school. How is "watching the numbers" helping these students and everyone exposed to them. Ignoring science has predictably led to continually increasing cases and exposures.

Additionally my high school tells me of inconsistent enforcement of masks among those who are close contacts or returning after their 5 days of isolations and our own nurses have confirmed that we are not following cdc guidelines for the shortened quarantine and isolation protocols as students who are supposed to be masked at all times are still eating lunch with the general population which is counter to updates cdc guidelines for k-12 students. "CDC continues to recommend indoor masking in K-12 schools for all individuals ages 2 years and older, including students, teachers, staff, and visitors, regardless of vaccination status. The school should ensure that there is a plan for people identified as close contacts to stay masked at all times indoors until 10 full days after their last close contact to someone with COVID-19. During times in the school day when students or staff members may typically remove masks indoors (such as during lunches, snacks, band practice, etc.), have a plan for them to adequately distance from others and ensure they wear their masks when not actively participating in these activities (such as when they are not actively eating)."

The reasonable precautions that should be in place and enforced for safe in persons learning are not there. This is not safe and would open the school up to liability.

I will be unable to attend the board meeting as I will be in an emergency physician all call meeting for my health system to discuss how we will care for all of the Covid patients being admitted- a surge to which you are actively contributing through your continued avoidance of science based decisions. Had I been able to speak these would be my comments. Please include the below in board meeting minutes.

I thought a lot about what to say. About reporting the numbers. The record high admissions at all hospitals in our region including Children's hospital. But you know the numbers and you know we have exceeded every threshold set by your previous standards from case positivity, to absences to recommendations from our local partners and yet here we are - mask optional and a significant portion unmasked. While I am starting and ending my days in meetings at the hospital that ask how we can see more patients, add more beds, and would I be comfortable going back to the ICU after 10 years out? What about my residents 6 months into training, how much can they do unsupervised?

How can we create frontline workers out of thin air? How can we stem the tide of illness and burnout?

INDIAN HILL EXEMPTED VILLAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
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Community support would go a long way, Our schools looking to healthcare experts for their advice and listening to it, That would help. Seeing leaders in the community showing solidarity and shared sacrifice would help. Instead we are betrayed by you. We are drowning. We are drowning in covid. We are drowning In the despair that comes when we can't help people because we are stretched too thin, Worn to weary, worked too hard and ignored by the very people we work to save. We are drowning. We are drowning. And the community have served faithfully and selflessly for two years of this pandemic and continue to serve now - is watching us and laughing and partying and hosting unmasked choir concerts and homecoming. We are asking for a lifeline. For some sign that you see us drowning and that you want to help. We do everything in our power to help you- at times at our own peril. All We are asking is a simple thing that the data supports. Masks work, our data shows we should Be masking, every healthcare organization and specialty group recommends masking in school. Do the right thing. Show the many physicians who have children in this district that you're listening, that you care, and that you want to help. We need to know you are here for us now as we have always been there for you. We need your support to give us hope and strength as this wave of Covid crashes on us.

Please help the community by setting the example for science supported measures and shared sacrifice in the worst surge yet of this pandemic. Require masking in our schools. Show the medical community you care.

Libby Beiter, MD.

Amy Yap submitted the following for inclusion in the minutes as part of public commentary;

Dear Mr. Davis,

Please enter this email into the public record for the January 11, 2022 Board of Education Meeting.

Dear IHEVSD Principals, Members of the Board of Education, Mr. Davis, Dr. Stewart, and Superintendent Koennecke,

From our previous email correspondence, Superintendent Koennecke, we agreed that in person learning is the shared priority of the district and families alike. Students, my 5th grader included, do so much better learning in person with their friends and classmates. In person instruction with our district's wonderful teachers is what all of our students deserve.

It was also stated in past emails, that many factors were taken into consideration in regards to the decision to go with a mask optional policy. These factors included the low numbers (of infection) in the local data, high percentages of vaccination in local zip codes and our teachers & staff, and the regional and state levels of hospitalization not being currently driven by child caseloads.

Currently, there are 92 IHEVSD students that COVID-19 positive, which for grades 1-12 is a rate of 4.3% (1)

These numbers do NOT include the positive COVID-19 case updates from today which include:

Primary School- 9 students, 1 staff member

Elementary School- 10 students, 2 staff member

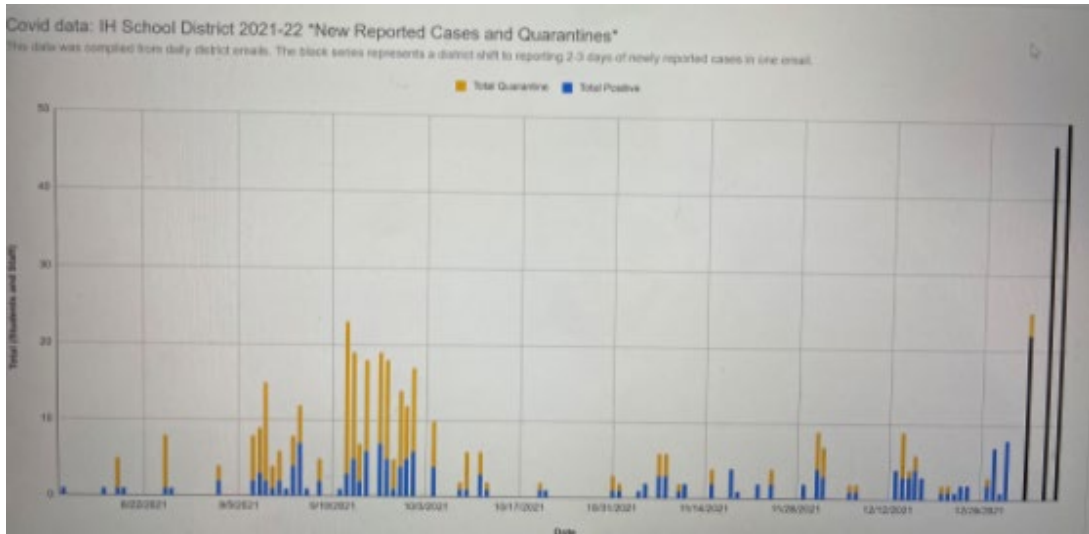
Middle School- 10 students

High School - 26 students , 1 staff member

If we add in those numbers, for students, that is 147 positive cases. (and a total of 9 staff members)

To give some perspective, here is a graph of all positive case notifications for the school district since the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year. The bars to the right of the graph in black are from the district reporting emails since the return to school on January 3, 2022. (original author unknown)

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While we may have high vaccination rates (the KNOWN staff vaccination rate is 80.9% (1)), the current number of active positive COVID-19 cases in the 45242 and 45243 zip codes are at 3.1% and 3.5% respectively. Comparatively, Hamilton County's COVID-19 positive rate of 1.7% (2) The consideration for high vaccination rates in the local zip codes and our district teacher & staff population are wonderful in regards to ensuring those individuals do not have severe symptoms from COVID-19. But due to the high transmissibility of the Omicron variant and asymptomatic spread, vaccination rates seem moot as an indicator for the continued ability for in person learning for populations, including those that are medically complex, unable to be vaccinated or have chosen not to be vaccinated.

Our hospitals, especially Cincinnati Children's hospital are under an immense amount of strain due to the current number of COVID-19 cases. In fact, they are the highest number of cases in children they have seen since the beginning of the pandemic. "Our numbers of hospitalized children with COVID have quadrupled in the past week from the previous low double digits," said Cincinnati Children's Hospital chief of staff Patty Manning. "These are the highest numbers we have seen for the entire pandemic."(3)

If our goal is to keep our students learning in person, then we need to ensure that our children are healthy, and not out sick, quarantined, or isolated.

Superintendent Koennecke, you also stated in previous communications to many district parents that, "I will continue to listen to area health officials, medical experts, and we will also continue to use our local school community data to make decisions. I appreciate all the data review and sharing. I will reflect on all you're sharing seriously."

The medical and public health organizations and their guidelines which are used as guidance for masking and other COVID-19 related policies were mentioned at the December 14, 2021 board meeting (as well as past board meetings). (4) The current guidance from all of these organizations, strongly suggest, if not outright demand the need for universal masking at this juncture.

Last week, it was brought to my attention that a letter was sent out from Ohio's hospitals and children's hospitals on December 28, 2021. That was two days before the email was sent out to school district families on December 30, 2021 regarding the masking policy for the return of school January 3, 2022. While the letter emphasized that the best protection from severe illness from COVID-19 is vaccination, there was also a very specific request of continuing to require masking in schools.

The letter from the Ohio Hospital Association and Ohio Children's Hospital Association included the following:

"To those of you who are continuing to require masks in school – thank you. This simple step is one of the best ways that we can slow the spread of the virus. To those who do not currently have a mask requirement, we respectfully ask that you consider one as your students return after holiday break. Health experts around Ohio have recommended Ohio schools have masking policies until more students get vaccinated, and that remains their recommendation as students return to school next week. This is even more urgent now because of the rapid spread of the Omicron variant.

...We know that masks work and are effective at slowing the spread of this virus. The best way to keep kids in school is to slow the spread of the virus. The best ways to slow the spread of the virus are to get vaccinated and wear a mask.

Even students who are asymptomatic or who have relatively mild symptoms have the ability to spread the virus to others. Their fellow students might then carry the virus home, spreading it to brothers and sisters, parents, and grandparents. If those

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family members are unvaccinated, they are at risk for severe illness and hospitalization while vaccinated family members can remain confident that their risk of severe illness is low.

Our healthcare system already is taxed, with one out of every four patients in the hospital with COVID-19. We're fighting hard to save their lives, while treating other Ohioans who need our help, like children with broken bones, people suffering from strokes, or those needing emergency care after a car accident. We can't do this alone. With Omicron spreading quickly through Ohio, we need everyone's help to make it through the coming weeks. Please help us by requiring students to wear masks when they return to school."

During the December 14, 2021 board meeting, the criteria for continuing to allow optional masking for grades 8-12 included a greater than 80% student vaccination rate, less than 5% close contact rate, and a less than 1% positive COVID-19 case rate. Since using these guardrails proved to be effective, it makes sense that we would adhere to these criteria for our other grades as well. (4):

>80% of our student population is vaccinated

Our KNOWN vaccinated student population grades 8-12 is 71.7% (4)

Our KNOWN vaccinated student population grades 1-7 is 31.8% (4)

close contacts are <5%

This number is not currently being reported. Can the district please release these numbers so that there is transparency in masking policy decision making? From speaking with other parents, there seems to be a high number of close contacts. In some cases, more than one close contact communication has been sent for a single student within a week.

positive COVID-19 cases are <1%

Cases of COVID-19 positive cases are already over 4% for our students. This is not counting the cases that were reported today.

The time to listen to area health officials and medical experts is now.

Health officials and medical experts have advocated to require masks in our schools.

Our student COVID-19 positive caseload is high.

The positive case rate in our local zip codes is high.

Our hospitals are being completely overwhelmed by COVID-19 cases.

It is time to act upon the current data available.

Other local school districts that were masking optional in some capacity have moved to universal masking in response to the current data. These districts include Sycamore Community School District and Madeira City School District (5).

Reinstating universal masking, at least until the positive case numbers decrease will:

- alleviate the strain on our hospitals and the medical professionals that live in the school district and surrounding community
- protect the health of those in our community: our students, teachers, staff, and our families
- keep students learning in person which will safeguard their mental health and continued academic excellence

It is time to pivot and return to universal masking. It will keep our community safe, protect our childrens' physical & mental health, and keep students learning in person.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Amy H. Yap

parent of a C/O 2029 IHEVSD student

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(1) Percentage calculated from Grades 1-12 student numbers as listed from the December 14, 2021 board meeting at 49:32 and does not include K since there were no reported number of students for that grade level.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/172O_J9dRXh22lqmjRlbLDHDyc-Jdi1b-/view

Numbers for positive cases are for grades 1-12 as reported from the COVID dashboard on 12/07/2022:

https://sites.google.com/ihsd.us/covid-dashboard/home?fbclid=IwAR09_MQsIot3SszVU4YYr2aJkMBXisOzfKeYTEuxzFQyhePdH9WUMvws4Mc

(2) For zip code specific COVID-19 case data, click on specific zip codes in the HCDH tableau dashboard:

https://analytics.hcph.org/views/HamiltonCountyPublicHealthJurisdictionCOVID-19Cases/HCPHCases?:embed_code_version=3&:embed=y&:loadOrderID=0&:display_spinner=no&:showAppBanner=false&:display_count=n&:showVizHome=n&:origin=viz_share_link

Information for population in 45242 and 45243 zip codes:

<https://www.unitedstateszipcodes.org/45242/> & <https://www.unitedstateszipcodes.org/45243/>

data from United States Postal Service, U.S. Census Bureau, Yahoo, Google, FedEx, and UPS.

Estimated Hamilton County population based on previous census data:

<https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-counties/oh/hamilton-county-population>

(3) <https://www.wlwt.com/article/childrens-covid-19-cases-skyrocket-as-new-booster-guidelines-expand-kids-eligibility/38698770>

(4) https://drive.google.com/file/d/172O_J9dRXh22lqmjRlbLDHDyc-Jdi1b-/view

Vaccination data of staff and students, based upon the number of vaccinated respondents over the number of students from minute 49:00 through 51:00

Masking policy criteria and medical & public health sources of guidance information from minute 52:42 through 54:00.

(5) Correspondence sent out to school district families on Sunday January 9, 2022 (Sycamore) and Monday January 10, 2022 (Madeira)

Katie Brennan submitted the following for inclusion in the minutes as part of public commentary;

Good evening,

I am writing again to ask that the superintendent and the board reinstate the IH district's mask mandate. My husband, a local physician, and I recently moved here from MI and specifically sought out the IH school district for our two, little girls because of its excellent reputation in putting students first.

We did not foresee that we would have to endure daily stresses in the form of close contact emails and increasingly scary numbers on a dashboard. Additionally, we did not foresee that parents would be able to leave masking decisions up to their six year old children? When we selected the IH school district, we did not foresee that the district would stop putting the safety of our children and staff first. We want to keep our children in school and the only way to do that safely, is to reinstate the mask mandate.

Why can't we return to a mask mandate for the safety of our students and staff until omicron presents a smaller risk to our community? CPS was forced to go remotely due to a staffing shortage. What if that were IH? I respectfully ask that the this be added to the board's record and that a mask mandate be reinstated immediately.

Please become part of the solution in slowing the spread of this new variant. Now is the time to take action.

Katie Brennan

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Jaime Love submitted the following for inclusion in the minutes as part of public commentary;

Dear Superintendent Koennecke,

The IHEVSD's Covid numbers are approaching that of the worst weeks from early 2021. These numbers are increasing every single day according to the dashboard. There are a growing number of IH parents concerned for health and safety of their children, including me, and no one knows at what point, if any, you will re-evaluate the mask-optional policy. Equally concerning, no one knows what criteria or what metrics you will use if and when you do decide to re-evaluate the decision.

In addition to the rising numbers of cases in the IHEVSD, more than 1000 kids in the Cincinnati area have officially tested positive for COVID in the past week. This doesn't count those who have tested positive with in-home tests, those who have become ill and just assumed they had Covid, or those who could not get access to testing. 25% (or more) of these kids will go onto have Long Covid (that's roughly 250) and some of these kids will have MIS-C in about a month.

Our local hospitals are filling up and are facing critical staffing shortages. This includes Cincinnati Children's Hospital which has admitted about 50 kids in the past week. Both the number of kids testing positive and the number of pediatric hospitalizations are double what was seen in the previous week and those were double what was seen the week before that. With our mask-optional policy, we are failing to do our part to protect the health and safety of our children as well as failing to help our area medical and healthcare professionals, as they tirelessly care for those who need them.

Many schools in our area are making the difficult decision to reinstate universal masking. Some are deciding to delay the start of the next term, and some are facing the decision of whether to close due to the high number of students, teachers, and staff testing positive. It continues to be a challenge understanding how a school district that prides itself on being a leader could choose to be turning a blind eye to science and the recommendations and pleas of local and national governing bodies, regulatory agencies, and professional organizations. We know that specific asks have come from the state and hospital associations asking all Ohio districts to reinstate universal mask policies, yet IHEVSD continues to ignore.

We have a growing number of students facing waning immunity. Thankfully, the CDC and FDA have both approved the use of booster doses for these students, but they are currently under-vaccinated, at risk, and the number of positive cases is rising faster than in any building. While public health professionals, epidemiologists, and virologists are all emphasizing that adequate vaccination is the primary way out of this pandemic, it alone will not achieve this. We continue to need a layered approach to control the spread and decrease the burden on our healthcare systems. A temporary return to universal masking achieves both of these things as well as protecting the health and safety of our children, teachers, and staff. Many of our neighboring and like-districts have already made this simple change and it makes so much sense to keep everyone as safe as possible.

With the current mask-optional policy in the IHEVSD, we are not taking care of our children, our Indian Hill community, or the larger community that surrounds us as well as we should. We are also not helping our local medical providers and hospitals, who are exhausted and overwhelmed. We, as a community, should, and need to do better. In order to do better, we need to temporarily reinstate universal masking until the number of Covid positive cases declines and the burden on our hospitals and medical systems eases.

Please help us take care of ourselves and others.

Sincerely,

Jaime Love

IH Parent

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CORRESPONDENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS –

Mr. Tullis discussed expanding the Board of Education Committees and adding new committees.

Mr. Koennecke thanked the Board of Education members as part of Board of Education Recognition Month.

Mr. Nichols provided a Facilities & Operations Update.

Dr. Stewart provided a Strategic Plan Update.

Steve Schlimm provided an Annual Nutrition Report for Aramark.

PERSONNEL ACTIONS (012217) - Mr. Sumerel moved, seconded by Mrs. Aichholz, to approve the following personnel matters as recommended by the Superintendent:

Approval of Classified Staff Contracts (2021-2022)

Margaret Hare, Educational Aide, 1-year limited, \$17.25/hour

Change of Contract

Kendra Thomas, High School Administrative Assistant, limited contract, step 6, starting date of January 3, 2022, 0.86 FTE

Increase the Daily Substitute Teacher Pay to \$100/day

Approval of Substitutes

Nicholas Burlison, Bus Driver

Stephen Wilson, Bus Driver (Pending background check)

Approval of Retirement/Resignation

Heather Pulkamp, Educational Aide, resignation effective January 7, 2022

Nicole Smith, High School Administrative Assistant, resignation effective December 31, 2021

Nicholas Burlison, Bus Driver, resignation effective December 31, 2021

Tuition Reimbursement

Amanda Epperson, Muskingum University, \$1,725.00

Lindsay Kearns, University of Dayton, \$2,100.00

Jeffrey Damadeo, University of Ashland, \$2,000.00

Melanie Broxterman, Lourdes University, \$459.00

Roll call vote was as follows:

Mrs. Aichholz, aye

Mr. Marx, aye

Mrs. Singh, aye

Mr. Sumerel, aye

Mr. Tullis, aye

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RESOLUTION DECLARING THE IMPRACTICABILITY OF TRANSPORTATION AND OFFERING PAYMENT TO PARENTS IN LIEU OF TRANSPORTATION (012218) – Mr. Sumerel moved, seconded by Mrs. Aichholz, to approve the following resolution;

The Superintendent of Schools, Kirk Koennecke recommends that the board of education adopt the following resolution:

WHEREAS the student(s) identified below have been determined to be residents of this school district, and eligible for transportation services; and

WHEREAS after a careful evaluation of all available options, it has been determined that it is impractical to provide transportation for these student(s) to their selected school(s); and

WHEREAS the following factors as identified in Revised Code 3327.02 have been considered:

1. The time and distance required to provide the transportation;
2. The number of pupils to be transported;
3. The cost of providing transportation in terms of equipment, maintenance, personnel, and administration;
4. Whether similar or equivalent service is provided to other pupils eligible for transportation;
5. Whether and to what extent the additional service unavoidably disrupts current transportation schedules;
6. Whether other reimbursable types of transportation are available.

WHEREAS the option of offering payment-in-lieu of transportation is provided in Ohio Revised Code: Therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the Indian Hill Exempted Village School District Board of Education hereby approves the declaration that it is impractical to transport the students identified herein and offers the parent(s)/guardians(s) of students named on the attachment, payment-in-lieu of transportation.

ATTACHMENT TO RESOLUTION:

Vaughan, Connor

St. Ursula Villa

7th

Brian Vaughan

Roll call vote was as follows:

Mrs. Aichholz, aye

Mr. Marx, aye

Mrs. Singh, aye

Mr. Sumerel, aye

Mr. Tullis, aye

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (012219) – Mr. Marx moved, seconded by Mr. Sumerel, to approve the minutes of the December 14, 2021 regular meeting. Roll call vote was as follows:

Mrs. Aichholz, aye

Mr. Marx, aye

Mrs. Singh, aye

Mr. Sumerel, aye

Mr. Tullis, aye

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL REPORTS (012220) – Mr. Marx moved, seconded by Mr. Sumerel, to approve the financial reports as presented for the month ended December 31, 2021. Roll call vote was as follows:

Mrs. Aichholz, aye

Mr. Marx, aye

Mrs. Singh, aye

Mr. Sumerel, aye

Mr. Tullis, aye

