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Hoopeston Area board talks possibilities for new school year, Honeywell demolition timeline

Hoopeston Area officials are looking at a hybrid situation for school in the fall, involving both on-site and remote learning.

At Thursday evening's school board meeting, Supt. Robert Richardson reviewed the results of an online study conducted by the district, asking families about their preferences and needs for their students.

Survey questions included whether parents favored in-school learning, remote learning or homeschooling; which buildings their children attended; whether they had access to childcare when school is not in session and whether they had access to Wi-Fi for remote learning.

The survey netted 94 responses from Maple families, 71 from John Greer, 87 from the middle school and 95 from the high school, Richardson said.

Of those, 69 percent preferred in-person learning, but many respondents added the caveat that they did not favor masks for their children. Respondents "Over and over again said, 'My kid's not coming to school if he has to wear a mask,'" Richardson said, "That's what the guideline say," he said. "We haven't worked out what happens if your kid comes to school and takes it off and refuses to wear it."

About 13 percent of families said they do not have childcare when school is not in session and 94.8 percent said they have Wi-Fi.

To help those who don't have online access, the district is looking at providing "hotspots," devices, such as cell phones, that can connect to the internet, which would



Hoopeston Area officials discuss possibilities for reopening school in the fall. Pictured are, from left, Lawrence Jahn, Lisa Leigh, board President Dave McFadden, Supt. Robert Richardson, Rich Eisenmann, Craig Lee and Debbie Klaber. Not pictured: Lee Cox.

then allow students to use the district-provided Chromebooks.

To help pay for coronavirus-related costs, the federal government set up the Elementary and Secondary School Relief Act. Illinois received more than \$500 million and, of that, Hoopeston Area received \$480,000 to use for the hotspots, as well as food, before- and after-school programs, Chromebooks to help with technology, and other expenses.

Richardson said teachers would like to have in-class learning, at least for a few days, which would give them time to create bonds with their students and also teach them necessary information, such as how to access remote learning features, if that becomes necessary.

Although calling remote learning "our Plan B.," more than once, Richardson suggested state officials will eventually require it. "Sooner or later, I feel that we're going to get pushed into remote learning," he said.

Coordinating all areas of the school experience to meet state guidelines is "a monster to tackle," Richardson said.

"Just look at transportation." Fifty people - a driver, monitor and 48 students - can be on a bus, but since social distancing is impossible, face coverings are necessary.

Richardson said he sat on a bus for 10 minutes, wearing a mask. "It was hot," he said. "It would keep them from getting COVID, but they die of a heat stroke?" he wondered.

Students' temperatures will be scanned before they get on the bus, which brings up another potential problem. "You pick up a kid and scan him and he has a fever," Richardson said. "You just passed his mom going to work. What do you do with the kid?"

Sports are another area of concern, as teams were allowed to have athlete conditioning and were set for contact between players, but state officials are backpedaling on that. "IHSA (Illinois High School Association, which oversees sports) is deferring to Illinois State Board of Education, which is issuing guidance, a process not sitting well with Richardson. "Give us rules," he said.

See SCHOOL on other side

From the Blotter

Antonietta R. Spina, 52, of Milford, was arrested on preliminary charges of theft over \$500 and writing a

Obituaries

BERNARD - James R. "Jim" Bernard, 80, of Rossville, died at 7:37 a.m. Wednesday,, July 15, 2020, at home. Graveside service will be at 11 a.m. Tuesday at Mann's Chapel Cemetery, south of Rossville. Memorials are suggested to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, 501 St. Jude Pl., Memphis, TN 38105, or Rossville Church of Christ, 514 E. Attica St., Rossville, IL 60963. Anderson Funeral Home, Hoopeston, is handling arrangements. Condolences may be left and www.anderson-funeral-home.com.

YEATS - Betty Jacqueline (Hardy) Yeats, 95, of Rossville, died at 5:39 p.m. Wednesday, July 15, 2020, at home. Graveside service will be at 11 a.m. Monday, July 20, 2020, at Spring Hill Cemetery, Danville. Memorials are suggested to the Iris Chapter of the Eastern Star, Danville. Anderson Funeral Home, Hoopeston, is handling arrangements. Condolences may be left and www.anderson-funeral-home.com.

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fraudulent check after police were called at 5:37 p.m. Friday to Olympic Hardware, 516 N. Dixie Hwy.

Spina was arrested in the 400 block of Holmes in Rossville, by a Vermilion County Sheriff's deputy, who were in Rossville on another matter. She was taken to the Public Safety Building in Danville to await arraignment.

Police are investigating an incident of counterfeit

School continued from other side

"(ISBE doesn't) have a problem telling us we have to go to school five hours a day for it to count. Don't just give us 'guidance.'

"We're trying to hit a moving target," Richardson said of the changes, while still trying to provide "the best education services and keep our kids safe and healthy.

The board will hold a special meeting at 6:30 p.m. Monday in the high school library to discuss the 2020-21 school reopening plan.

In other business, the board discussed the timeline for demolishing Honeywell Grade School and, as part of that, in a 6-0 vote, approved a resolution to sell unneeded items stored at the school. Board member Lee Cox was absent.

The action will allow the district to sell memorabilia to residents. Some items have already been given to nearby school districts. Potomac school got a couple of truckloads of desking, filing cabinets and other items, while Westville took a conference table.

The clock is ticking on emptying the school of useful items. Everything of value has to be out of the building by a July 30 preview for contractors interested in bidding on the demolition, as bid specs call for costs to include disposing of items in the building.

Richardson said he has had requests from people to buy things from Honeywell but "I'm leery," he said. "It becomes a liability. I don't mind going over there and doing stuff but I don't want the public to have free access."

A television and electronics collection will be held on the Honeywell School property from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on July 25. Richardson said that would be a good time for the district to hold a sort of rummage sale on Honeywell items the public may be interested in purchasing.

People could go in escorted and look at chairs, desks or whatever. Richardson's goal is to "put as much good stuff out into our community" as possible.

currency reported at 10:04 p.m. Friday in the 700 block of North Market.. A 41-year-old Hoopeston woman reported someone used multiple fake \$20 bills.

Megan M. Brewster, 33, of Hoopeston, was arrested at 9:35 a.m. Saturday in the 500 block of West Penn. Wanted on a Vermilion County warrant for failure to appear/petition to revoke, she was released on \$150 cash bond plus \$75 bonding fee with a new court date.

Fire Calls

Hoopeston Fire Department was called at 3:27 p.m. Friday for an activated carbon monoxide detector in the 400 block of West Lincoln. Firemen found the detector to be bad, No injuries were reported.

Classifieds

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Available now: 726 S. Third St. 3 BR. \$475/mo. + security deposit. References.. (217) 304-3477 for application. Owner/Lic. real estate agent

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Teasdale Latin Foods has immediate openings on 2nd shift in both Distribution and Manufacturing. Pay to be determined based on experience level. Stop by the Human Resources office at 215 West Washington Street, Hoopeston, for more detail. Please no phone calls.

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We are currently hiring for our Verizon location next to McDonald's in Hoopeston! Are you interested in pursuing a career in sales where you can earn a base plus commission? Then this

A green Krome bicycle was found at 10:09 a.m. Saturday in yard in the 900 block of West Honeywell. The owner may identify and claim it at the police station.

A Superman watch was found Saturday in the 200 block of West Penn. The owner may identify and claim it at the police station.

Weather

Partly sunny today. High 86. Tonight, cloudy, chance of thunderstorms. Low 67. Tomorrow, storms likely. High 84, low 70.

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position might just be for you! If you like sales, love technology and have a competitive spirit you may have what it takes to join our amazing team! You'll use your knowledge and passion for technology to deliver an effortless customer experience while pursuing challenging and rewarding goals! This role comes with an hourly base and commission package as well as awesome benefits. Please email your resume to seth.wilson@alstiremart.com or stop by our store for more details.

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We are now offering a part-time flexible work schedule for Moms & Dads who want to earn extra cash during school hours, with an 8 am - 4:30 pm schedule to fit the needs of your family. If you are interested in applying for a growing company, please apply on-line at www.full-fill.com go to employment or employment opportunities and apply as indicated. EOE

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