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**Thursday, July 30, 2020**

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## Board unanimously approves hybrid Return to Learn plan to open school in fall

Neither of two plans submitted by a committee of Hoopeston Area staff and administrators to reopen schools was approved at a special board meeting Tuesday night.

Instead, a hybrid combining parts of both was unanimously approved by the board.

The committee recommended the A/B plan, which would divide middle and high school students into Group A and Group B. Under the plan Group A would attend classes Monday and Thursday, with Group B students attending Tuesday and Friday. Wednesday was set as a remote learning day.

With the student population divided in some fashion, there would be fewer students in buildings and each class, making social distancing easier.

High school Principal John Klaber said the main drawback to the plan would be for things like band, where, because of how students were divided, "you could have all the woodwinds and a tuba."

The second, less popular, suggestion was a block plan with a division by class periods, with periods 1-4 being held twice one week and periods 5-8 held twice, then reversing the following week. That scenario makes it harder to plan teacher schedules, especially for teachers shared among buildings, Klaber said.

While class periods would be longer in the block plan - 53 minutes compared to 30 - some of that time would be lost during passing periods between classes as students tried to maintain social distance.

A straw poll at about the three-hour mark of the four hour meeting saw members Rich Eisenmann, Lisa Leigh, Lawrence Jahn and Craig Lee, who attended remotely, favoring the block plan, while Lee Cox opted for the A/B scenario. Board President Dave McFadden said he would vote for neither.

Prior to the straw poll, McFadden said he researched statistics from groups such as RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network), claiming the incidence of child sexual abuse increased during the shutdown and that



As others listen, Dylan Swank, Hoopeston Education Association president, discusses staff concerns during a special district board meeting Tuesday night. The board met to discuss a plan to reopen school in the fall after having been shut down in the spring.

because of the shutdown, children had no one to advocate for them. Other statistics showed a higher incidence of physical abuse of children during the shutdown, he said before asking teachers and administrators if they considered those issues in coming up with a plan that would have children in school only four days a week. "If you feel we're pushing you, this is why we're pushing you," he said.

Additionally, the plans keep social distancing and face coverings in mind, they do nothing to follow a guideline that children younger than 13 be in school daily. While

the plan for Maple and John Greer will have students in school five days a week, some 13-year-olds are at the middle school, he said.

McFadden told a story of two boys on bikes, both about nine years old, who stopped at Anthem Chevrolet to get a drink of water. They planned to Angel's Closet in Milford, which McFadden said was dangerous. "Our passion extends to the whole world, not just here," he said.

Looking at the faces of the teachers and principals, he then asked, "Why does us asking questions offend you?"

**See LEARN on other side**



**Learn** continued from other side

It was a question they were happy to answer. Kim Hutzal, assistant high school principal, reminded said school personnel are mandated to report suspected abuse to authorities. She said staff is happy to see students when they come “and we worry about them when

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they go home.” Suzi Root, Maple principal, said the plan was not an “administrator” plan and that in their buildings, principals talk teachers, parents and students to gauge their thoughts and concerns. “We’re just trying to do the best we can with what they’ve given us,” she said. McFadden asked, as he did at the previous meeting, about districts planning to open for all day, in person learning. Administrators said that at least some of those districts are rethinking that plan as they look at scenarios Hoopeston Area’s committee has already considered.

HEA President Dylan Swank said teachers worry more about their students’ health than they do about their own. The high school English teacher, who served on an Illinois Department of Public Health committee, said, “There are some districts that can open with full in-person learning. I don’t think we’re one of them.” At a standstill, Klaber came up with a compromise: merging the block plan with the Wednesday remote learning day of the A/B plan. Students would get more minutes of instruction each week, plus the remote learning day would allow teachers to schedule 1:1 time with

**Obituaries**

**BUCK** - Joseph C. Buck, 65, of Rossville, died at 6:06 p.m. July 23, 2020, at home. Visitation will be 4-8 p.m. Thursday at Sunset Funeral Home and Cremation Center, Danville and 10 a.m. until the 11 a.m. service Friday at Rossville United Methodist Church. Memorials are suggested to Mustard Seed Christian Daycare of Rossville, American Heart Association or donor’s choice.

**MULCAHEY** - Betty (Wegeng) Mulcahey, 89, of Newman, died Saturday, July 25, 2020, in Comfort Care at Carle, Champaign. Private funeral Mass was held Tuesday at Sacred Heart Church, Villa Grove. Burial was in St. Joseph Cemetery, Bongard. Memorials are suggested to St. Joseph Cemetery or Sacred Heart Alter Society. Among Mrs. Mulcahey’s survivors is a daughter, Margaret Mulcahey, of Hoopeston. Joines Funeral Home, Newman, is handling arrangements.

**Weather**

Chance of thunderstorms today. High 81. Tonight, cloudy. Low 63. Tomorrow, partly sunny. High 80, low 60. For real time Hoopeston weather, visit [justthefacts.net/weather/](http://justthefacts.net/weather/).

students who need it. Although still concerned about students under 13 not attending daily, McFadden agreed the compromise was workable and it was approved 7-0. The plan mandates everyone in all buildings wear face coverings. Students who refuse will be warned and sent home. A second infraction will result in having to do remote learning. At the middle/high schools, breakfast will consist of prepacked things, such as granola bars, and bottles of water or other beverage. Instead of going to the auditorium, students will go directly to their first period class-

**Classifieds**

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room. Lunch will be a “grab and go” as school will dismiss at 12:20 p.m., Klaber said. In other action, the board: • Approved resignations of Mia Harrier, fifth grade special education teacher; Madie Stock, middle school girls track coach; Ryan Jones, assistant high school boys basketball coach and middle school track coach; Charles Grant, Maple custodian; Marilyn Hollen, middle school custodian; and Jill Bence, part time Maple secretary. • Hired Mara Sutton as John Greer reading teacher/Response to Intervention long term substitute. • Approved Maria Baldwin as cross country volunteer.

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](mailto:seth.wilson@alstiremart.com) or stop by our store for more details.  
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