

**Wissahickon Charter School
Board of Trustees Meeting
August 31, 2021 6:06pm-6:46pm
Meeting Held Virtually via Zoom Conferencing**

Board Members Present: Justin DiBerardinis (Chair), Rachel Loeper (Vice Chair), Charles Case (Treasurer), Deborah Levin (Secretary), Shauna Mace, Rekyiah Abdul-Zahir, Samantha Mathew, John Wylie, Ebony Staton-Weidman

Staff Present: Kristi Littell (CEO), Jane Walsh (Development Associate), Jess Pastore (Director of Development), Allison Spellerberg (Teacher), Ally Rasp (Guidance Counselor), Abigail Beljean (Guidance Counselor), Jenn Goren (Learning Support), Erica Hauswald (Reading Specialist), Anne McNichol (Learning Specialist)

Guests Present: N/A

Justin called the meeting to order at 6:06pm.

Welcome/Introductions (Justin DiBerardinis, Chair)

All board members introduced themselves to the guests present.

Vaccine Mandate Proposal (Kristi Littell, CEO)

Kristi read in-full the proposal that the Board of Trustees charge her to implement a plan for a Vaccine Mandate for WCS employees, which will serve the purpose of mandating that all Wissahickon Charter School employees and certain Wissahickon Charter School contractors will be required to receive full Covid-19 vaccination in order to work in-person at our school. Kristi noted that medical and religious exemptions would be allowed with documentation.

Testimonies

Anne McNichol expressed her gratitude for the administration's work to prepare us for our return to in-person learning and keeping everyone safe. She expressed her fears of the increased spread of the Delta variant of the Covid-19 virus, her desire to keep our students safe and encouraged the Board to vote in support of the mandate.

Erica Hauswald read a testimony stating that she believes that the proposed mandate is “the best option” for our school, especially since so many of our students do not have the ability to be vaccinated. She argued that, for all of those who are medically eligible, receiving the vaccine is no different than other requirements we impose on our staff such as background checks and TB tests.

Jenn Goren also spoke in support of the mandate. She noted that the vaccine has been scientifically proven to be safe and effective and believes that having all of our staff vaccinated will keep us in school for longer and allow our students a well-deserved “sense of normalcy.”

Ally Rasp thanked the administration and Board for their transparency around this discussion and shared her support for the proposal. She believes that this requirement will allow her to better protect her family, including her young daughter.

Justin read a testament from Paul Vande Stouwe, who was unable to attend the meeting. A copy of his written testimony has been attached.

Allison Spellerberg “echoed” the previous statements, expressing her support for the mandate in order to keep our school community and our families safe.

Abigail Beljean spoke in support of the mandate, believing that it is the employees’ obligation to take “every possible step” to keep our students safe.

Justin then opened the discussion to members of the Board.

Board Member Samantha Mathews asked Kristi how this proposal has been communicated to the staff and asked if there was any additional feedback received from staff beyond what was expressed during this meeting. Kristi noted that she emailed all staff sharing her intention to present this proposal to the board. Kristi heard from about 20 members of staff, some in her office hours and others by email. Out of the 20, 16 expressed support, 3 expressed personal concern in particular regarding their religious beliefs, and the other person who attended the office hours did not express an opinion.

Shauna Mace expressed gratitude to Kristi for her work to keep the staff and students safe.

Ebony Staton Weidman noted that the science behind the efficacy and safety of the vaccines has been continually proven. She expressed her belief that the mandate will help Wissahickon be stewards of our global community, and that vaccination and masks are the best way to reduce transmission and the severity of the response should someone still become infected.

Justin called for a motion to consider the proposal. Ebony made a motion and Charles seconded.

Eight Board Members voted in favor of the Wissahickon Charter School Mask Mandate and one member abstained. The vote was approved.

A motion to adjourn was led by Debbie and seconded by Rachel. Motion to adjourn approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:46pm

Handouts that were distributed are attached.

- Authorization of COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate for Wissahickon Charter School
- Accommodation Request Form - Medical Exemption from COVID -19 Vaccination Policy