

THE CHARGER

329 board discusses masks rules at meeting

Emma Alderman | news editor

The USD 329 board received new information on lessening masks restrictions at its monthly meeting Monday night.

There was a discussion about masks due to Wabaunsee County lessening its restrictions. Wabaunsee Health Department administrator Ray Finley advised against making masks no longer necessary in USD 329 buildings for now and instead advised the board to wait thirty days and see how surrounding areas lessening their restrictions affect us. So far USD 329 has had very little transmission of the virus through school.

During Principal Hutley's report she recognized both the boys and girls basketball teams for their sub state victories and the boy's second place finish at state. She also recognized the all Mid-East League selections in basketball of Lauren Schutter, Tyler Loemeyer, Braden Meseke and the honorable mentions of Madison Wertzberger, Dawson Shultz and Cade Oliver.

Sheriff Rob Hoskins introduced the new Security Resource Officer Leo Lovely to the board and spoke about the upcoming town hall meeting that will take place Friday at 7 p.m. Hoskins also mentioned that there are plans for similar meetings for students in the district in the near future.

During the meeting the board reaffirmed that following the end of this school year Paxico Middle School will be closed down. Alma Grade School and Maple Hill Elementary School will then become preschool through fifth grade buildings and Wabaunsee Junior High will be a 6-8 grade building. There has not been a definite plan made on what to do with the Paxico Middle School building yet.

The board accepted a bid of \$3600 from David Vermitten for structural design services of the WHS Limestone building, WHS weight room, and the older section of the WJH building.

The board also approved the hiring of Kevin Sullivan as the WHS counselor to replace retiring Marilyn Workman. It also approved rehiring winter sports coaches and hired Karen Wright as assistant WHS softball coach.

Boys, girls basketball advance to state

Jacob Meseke | sports editor

With an improbable run in the playoffs, the boys came up short in the championship to Hillsboro, 59-50. The boys ended the season with a 13-13 record. The boys started the season with a 1-10 record and entered the playoffs with a record of 8-12.

In the first round of state, the boys defeated Valley Falls 64-40. Senior Tyler Lohmeyer recorded 17 points and 17 rebounds and junior Cade Oliver had 22 points and a half court shot to beat the halftime buzzer. In the state semifinals, the boys faced Hoxie who was led by 7-footer Harlan Obioha. Hoxie went into the game as the number one seed and undefeated. The boys upset Hoxie 73-56. Sophomore Eli Oliver had 26 points and made four three pointers.

The boys faced Hillsboro in the 2A state championship. Junior Brayden Meseke's 24 points would not be enough as the boys fell 59-50. Hillsboro jumped out to an early 14-4 start. The Chargers would end up tying Hillsboro at 23 in the second quarter, but could never get a hold of the lead.

The girls lost their first round state matchup to Valley Heights 60-44. Junior Lauren Schutter had 22 points, 8 rebounds, and 8 blocks. The lone senior Maddy Wertzberger added five rebounds and fouled out in the third quarter of her final high school game. The game was played at Valley Heights instead of at Bramlage Coliseum like years past.

For both teams, seniors brought leadership for the teams.

"Each one brought something we need: Dawson brought leadership and a work ethic each and every day that is unmatched. Tyler commands the boards and is one of the better passing big men in the state. Jace brings us energy off the bench and is the definition of a team player," said head boys coach Christian Ulsaker.

"Madisyn Wertzberger, our only senior, demonstrated tremendous leadership all year. I cannot say enough good things about Maddy and what she brought to our team this year," said head girls coach Trevor Keller.



Senior Dawson Schultz shoots during the state championship game against Hillsboro. The Chargers, who entered the postseason 7-12, made an incredible run to the championship game, beating undefeated Hoxie in the semifinal. They fell in the final 59-50, finishing as state runner-up. Photo by Paxton Meyer.

Both girls and boys will be returning their leading scorer. Junior Brayden Meseke led the team with 13.9 points per game and junior Lauren Schutter averaged 14.3 points per game.

"We will have 3 starters returning next year. Brayden Meseke, Cade Oliver and Eli Oliver. I expect each to grow as basketball players over the summer. Brayden will continue to work on his ball handling, Cade will work on his outside game and Eli will be in the weight room getting stronger," said Ulsaker.

"We are really excited about the group that we are bringing back next year. We feel like the team made tremendous growth

over the course of the season. There are several areas that we will focus on improving both individually and as a team this offseason," said Keller.

To make it back to the state tournament both teams will need to work hard through the offseason. The boys will need to have their sophomores fill in big roles.

"I think what hurt us the most this year was our depth. We have a lot of going to be Junior. I expect to fill some major holes. My hope is we can go 8 deep in a rotation next year," said Ulsaker.

"In order for this team to return to the state tournament next year it will be important to continue to improve this offseason. Each time we get in the gym this summer we have to take advantage of the opportunity to improve our game both individually and as a team," said Keller.

Parent meeting to address online predators

Emma Alderman | news editor

Parents and community members have a chance to learn more about predators and dangers facing their children in a presentation Friday evening.

The Wabaunsee Sheriff's office is sponsoring a presentation about those who exploit social media and information technology to victimize children. The program, Protecting Our Children: A Town Hall on Sexting, Sextortion, and Bullying, is a 7 p.m. Friday at Wabaunsee High School.

The discussion will be lead

by experts from the FBI Human Trafficking and Child Exploitation Task Force and the LifeHouse Child Advocacy Center.

In a facebook post last month, sheriff Rob Hoskins warned parents of the dangers facing children in the community.

"Each and every one of our children are vulnerable and can be preyed upon by a predator without our knowledge or us even having the slightest idea what is happening to our children," Hoskins said in the post. "With today's technology our young people are exposed

to this each and every time they log onto a computer or use their cell phone. The pressure these devices place on our children is enormous and can not be avoided. It has happened in our communities and many of our children have been confronted with predators that are near and far."

The target audience for this presentation is adults in the community. Some topics may not be suitable for teens and young children so childcare will be provided on site. There are plans to have a similar presentation for students in the near future.

7 students win regional journalism competitions

Wabaunsee journalism earned seven regional journalism championships last month, and qualified 21 entries to the state competition later this semester.

The Kansas Scholastic Press Association regional competition, which usually features both online and in-person competitions, was completed completely online in late February. Contests include writing, editing, photography, design and cartooning competitions.

For writing competitions, students receive information and quotes and must complete a story on a short deadline. Photography and design students also receive prompts, for instance in the student life category, the assignment was to create a "pandemic portrait," to create a photographic portrait of a fellow student or students who have been affected by the pandemic in a newsworthy way.

"Feature writing in yearbook helped me learn how to organize stories so they are interesting for readers," feature writing champion Melissa Campbell said. "I think I'll do well at state as long as I can focus and do my best."

The 21 placing entries put Wabaunsee 2nd in its regional, behind Humboldt High School with 39. Team points are not calculated at regional competition, but will matter at the state competition in May.

Seniors Emma Frey and Karlee Feyh both look to defend state championships from last year, in Editorial writing and Advertising.

KSPA REGIONAL CHAMPIONS

Emma Frey — Sports Writing
Melissa Campbell — Feature Writing
Emma Alderman — News Writing
Emma Frey — Editorial Writing
Jacob Meseke — Yearbook Sports
Karlee Feyh — Advertising Design
Ryan Grätsch — Editorial Cartoon

OTHER STATE QUALIFIERS

Emma Alderman, 3rd, Copy Editing
Robert Potter, 4th, Copy Editing
Jacob Meseke, 2nd, Copy Editing
Justice Houston, 2nd, Yearbook Copywriting
Isabella Wade, 3rd, Feature Writing
Kendyl Bolinder, 2nd, News Writing
Justice Houston, 3rd, Cutline Writing
Karlee Feyh, 4th, Cutline Writing
Kendyl Bolinder, 5th, Editorial Writing
Sarah Vanstory, 4th, Winter in the Heartland
Sarah Vanstory, 5th, Sports Photography
Paxton Meyer, 6th, Sports Photography
Danielle Murphy, 3rd, Student Life Photography
Allyson Garst, 4th, Student Life Photography