

**Lackawanna Trail schools get OK for full reopening**

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The Lackawanna Trail School Board approved on Monday a Phased School Reopening Health and Safety Plan that calls for a total reopen on Sept. 10 but some students and families may opt for distance learning out of safety health concerns.

Contingent upon Pennsylvania’s reopening status later this summer, faculty will return for two in-service days on Sept. 8 and 9. The school year for students will run from Sept. 10 to June 9.

For two hours Monday, the board and administration fielded calls remotely through the Zoom meeting.

Superintendent Matt Rakauskas said that based on surveys, the district believes that around 200 people will be signing into Trail learning through a virtual platform that will be synchronized with what students are getting by attending the brick-and-mortar elementary center or high school.

He noted that all students will be getting Chromebooks that will be used in either setting.

High school Principal Mark Murphy said he was taken aback by pictures in the national media with crowds of students in a Georgia school. He added that he would never put his students in that setting with the caseload that state is facing. “It’s just not worth it,” he said.

But he does believe in rural Wyoming County, it will be possible.

Still, when the pandemic settles, Murphy said he is looking forward to the day when all students can get the face-to-face instruction that contributes to what he believes is a best secondary educational outcome, and won’t have to rely on virtual learning unless that serves their particular needs.

Board member Michael Mould spoke passionately for close to 10 minutes, acknowledging many of the precautions the administration, faculty and staff have taken this summer, and will continue to do so.

He spoke of lingering concerns about transportation, social distancing at recess and cleaning. “It’s going to put a terrific strain on our resources, and I’m not sure we can pull it off,” Mould said. “I feel it is my responsibility to do what is right at this time, and I vote no.”

Joe Ross also voted ‘No’ while also applauding everyone for their efforts to try to make it work.

The Phased School Reopening Plan passed 7-2.

To provide another forum to answer parents’ questions, the district is planning a Town Hall Meeting on Thursday, at 7 p.m. Instructions as to how to sign on should be at the district’s website at www. ltsd.org.

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