

MEDFIELD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Joint Meeting with Board of Health
Zoom Remote Meeting
March 9, 2021

PRESENT: Jessica Reilly - Chair
Leo Brehm -Vice Chair
Timothy Knight - Recording Secretary
Meghan Glenn - Financial Secretary
Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke - Member at Large

ALSO PRESENT: Jeffrey Marsden - Superintendent of Schools
Michael LaFrancesca - Director of Finance and Operation
Andrea Moores - Secretary

The joint meeting of the Medfield School Committee and the Medfield Board of Health was called to order.

The School Committee took a Roll Call to begin the meeting:

- Leo Brehm- yes
- Timothy Knight- yes
- Meghan Glenn -yes
- Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke -yes
- Jessica Reilly- yes

The joint meeting began at 4:07 pm.

The following Board of Health members were also in attendance

- Stephen Resch
- Melissa Coughlin
- Kathy Thompson
- Holly Rand
- Carol Read

Mr. Jeff Kane, Ms. Meenakshi Chivukula, Ms. Nancy Bennott, and Ms. Kristine Trierweiler were also in attendance.

The purpose of this joint meeting was to discuss the return of students to full in-person learning.

Return to Full In-Person Learning - presented by Dr. Jeffrey Marsden

Dr. Marsden presented an overview of the district timeline from March 16, 2020 to date. On March 5, 2021 the Massachusetts Board of Education voted to give Education Commissioner Jeff Riley the authority to eliminate the Hybrid and Remote Learning Models statewide for all students Grades K-5. Dr. Marsden stated that it is time for students to return to full in-person learning for the remainder of the school year. This is not only critical for their education and mental health this year, but also for the 2021-2022 school year.

As a result of the Massachusetts Board of Education vote Dr. Marsden shared the following schedule for the Medfield Public Schools return to full in-person learning.

- Grades 2-5 (Wheelock and Dale St.) - Return on Tuesday, March 23rd
- Grades 6-8 (Blake Middle School) - Return on Monday, March 29th
- Grades 9-12 (MHS) - Return on Monday, April 5th

Dr. Marsden provided information on the following criteria for needed in order to facilitate the return to full in-person learning:

- Transportation
- Ventilation
- Lunch
- Physical Distancing
 - Wheelock School - 4 feet to 5.5 feet
 - Dale Street School - 4 feet to 5 feet
 - Blake Middle School-4 feet to 4.5 feet
 - Medfield High School-3 feet to 4 feet
- Pooled Testing/BinaxNow Testing

The meeting was opened up to the committee members to ask clarifying questions regarding Dr. Marsden's presentation:

Ms. Holly Rand asked if Dr. Marsden would consider shutting down athletics if it was evident that a cluster of cases or contact tracing was happening within those groups. Dr. Marsden stated that if necessary it would be done and referenced the shutting down of athletics for a one week earlier this year for the same reason.

Dr. Stephen Resch wanted to know if the new state guidelines would restrict the district's response to an outbreak or increase in positive cases. Dr. Marsden explained that student and staff safety is the number one priority and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) would support a pivot back to hybrid or remote learning if necessary.

Ms. Jessica Reilly stated that it would be beneficial to have a plan for any shifts that may occur due to a rise in positive cases within the school community and asked the Board of Health for their insight on mitigating an increase of cases.

Ms. Melissa Coughlin stressed the importance of continuing Pooled Testing and BinaxNow testing. Ms. Coughlin shared her thoughts on providing eye coverings for faculty and staff.

Dr. Stephen Resch stated that if an uptick were to occur it would be most probable at the high school level. Increased frequency of pooled testing would be helpful to get ahead of transmission and reduce the time in identifying an infectious individual. He also recommended holding classes outside if and continue to encourage adults to stay six feet away from students as much as possible. The vaccination of teachers will also help reduce the risk of transmission.

Mr. Leo Brehm asked Dr. Resch what would signify an uptick in cases. Dr. Resch explained that the metrics and positivity rates would indicate if there was an uptick. He also explained the schools would only need to take action if there was an indication of increased transmission in the schools but this has not been the case to date.

Dr. Laura McCullough explained the importance of teachers, children and members of the community getting vaccinated and how it will help mitigate the transmission of COVID-19.

Mr. Jeff Kane asked Dr. Marsden if there have been any discussions about holding classes outside with the weather getting warmer. Dr. Marsden stated that teachers would be encouraged to bring the classrooms outside as much as possible.

Ms. Carol Read stated that Dr. Marsden's proposal was thoughtful and well planned out. She acknowledged Dr. Marsden's commitment to keeping the windows open on the buses to increase ventilation while keeping bus capacity at 47 students. She agreed that continued Pooled Testing, BinaxNow Testing, and contact tracing are important tools to help mitigate transmission. She informed the committee that the Board of Health is advocating to bring on a full time public health nurse to work for the Town in the Fall of 2021. Ms. Carol Read stated that she supports Dr. Marsden's plan to bring students back to school.

Ms. Kathy Thompson provided a quick update on the district's Pooled Testing Program and shared that the district is close to having two thirds of its faculty vaccinated.

Ms. Meghan Glenn asked the Board of Health if students over 16 could be vaccinated by the end of the school year. The Pfzier vaccine is the one that has been approved for ages 16 and up but based on the vaccine roll out and priority groups it is unlikely that students will be vaccinated before the end of the school year.

Mr. Timothy Knight asked if there was additional guidance for spring sports. Ms. Kristine Trierweiler explained that the Town's Board of Health agent is working through the updated guidance with the youth sports organizations in the Town and additional guidance is scheduled to be released on March 22, 2021.

Mr. Leo Brehm asked if there would be assigned seats on buses for contract tracing. Dr. Marsden stated that there would be assigned seating and buses will still be allocated by schools for contact tracing purposes.

Ms. Jessica Reilly opened the meeting to public comment:

Lee Ann Harvey, 23 Tubwreck Drive, asked how lunch would be handled at the Blake Middle School. Dr. Marsden explained that students will maintain six feet of physical distance and be outside as much as possible. Students will also eat lunch in the cafeteria, gym and library which can accommodate six feet of distancing. High School students will continue to have a grab and go lunch

Debra Garverich, 297 South Street, asked if the hallway and pathways in the high school will continue to be one way. Dr. Marsden stated that the one way pathways will continue and be enforced.

Barbara Zeppieri, 7 Haven Road, asked for clarification on the contact tracing protocols now that students will be within six feet of each other. Ms. Thompson explained that the same rules apply for contact tracing and any student within six feet would be considered a close contact and be required to quarantine. A student may be released from quarantine on day 7 if a negative test result was obtained on day 5 or later and is asymptomatic. If a student develops symptoms in quarantine a negative PCR test will be required to return to school after the quarantine period ends.

Jaclyn White, 50 Country Way, asked if middle school students would be able to use their lockers once they return in full in-person. Ms. Jessica Reilly explained that the use of lockers was discouraged because it could lead to students congregating close together. Dr. Marsden expects the current protocols for locker use will not change.

Joanna Hom, 47 Blacksmith Drive, asked if a whole class would need to be quarantined if there was a positive case. Ms. Thompson explained that the whole class would be notified if there was a positive case

in the class and if a student was a close contact they would be contacted by the school nurse with the protocol that needs to be followed.

Ms. Jessica Reilly asked Ms. Kathy Thompson if there is guidance for parents heading into allergy season since COVID -19 symptoms are similar to allergy symptoms. Ms. Thompson explained that symptom checklist parents should be using every day will help determine what the COVID-19 symptoms are and if students may need to be referred to their primary physician for further evaluation. The Pooled Testing in the schools will be a great resource for parents and both Ms. Thompson and Ms. Melissa Coughlin encouraged full participation in the district's pooled testing program.

Jennifer Fehser, 11 Jade Walk, asked if students were quarantined as a result of being a close contact would those students be able to livestream into their classrooms. Dr. Marsden explained he can not answer this question at this time but it will be part of the discussions with the Medfield Teachers' Association over the next few days.

Ms. Melissa Coughlin stated that if it was determined that transmission was happening on the buses her suggestion would be to have bus monitors on the buses to ensure that students are wearing their masks while riding the bus.

Nicole Eby Macy, 54 Flint Locke Lane, asked if Cohort D will be made available to students whose families may be at high risk. Dr. Marsden explained that Cohort D will be available for the rest of the school year. A binding survey will be sent out to families next week.

Mr. Timothy Knight requested that a Board of Health member be present at the Reopening Public Forum.

March 11, 2021 at 7:00 pm - Public Reopening Forum & Regular Meeting

A motion was made by Ms. Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke, seconded by Mr. Timothy Knight to adjourn the meeting.

A Roll Call Vote was taken to adjourn the meeting:

- Jessica Reilly-yes
- Meghan Glenn-yes
- Leo Brehm - abstain
- Tim Knight - yes
- Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke - yes

The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:23 pm.

Minutes Approved by School Committee: April 1, 2021

Respectfully Submitted,
Andrea Moores
Secretary