

**EAST LONGMEADOW SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**



District Mission

"Our mission in the East Longmeadow Public Schools is to promote achievement and accountability in all endeavors as we educate today for the challenges of tomorrow"

DATE: August 6, 2020
TIME: 6:00 P.M.
WHERE: Superintendent's Conference Room

Meeting called to Order by : Gregory Thompson, Chair
THIS MEETING IS BEING HELD REMOTELY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GOVERNOR OF MASSACHUSETTS' MARCH 12, 2020 ORDER SUSPENDING CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF THE OPEN MEETING LAW MA G.L.c. 30A, SECTIONA 20.

PER THE GOVERNORS' ORDER THE PUBLIC WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO PHISICALLY ACCESS THIS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC CAN ACCESS THE MEETING VIA LIVE STREAM AT:
<https://zoom.us/j/98803574707?pwd=dmVjRjZhc3VmYWYm42RWRvSmlaZz09> (Passcode: 406250)

As a preliminary matter, this is Gregory Thompson, School Committee Chair. Permit me to confirm that all members and persons anticipated on the agenda are present and can hear me. Members, when I call your name, please respond in the affirmative

Sarah Truoiolo - here
William Fonseca - here
Antonella Raschilla - here
Elizabeth Marsian-Boucher - here
Gregory Thompson - here
Gordon Smith, Superintendent - here
Pamela Blair, Asst. Supt for Business - here
Kathy Celetti, Recording Secretary - here
Heather Brown, Dir. of Curriculum - here
Dr. Joanne Welch - here
Dr. Clarke, School Physician
Amy Petrosky, Dir. of Public Health
Kelly LaBombard, ELPS Nursing Supervisor

Approval of Minutes-None

Committee/Sub-committee Communications

Sarah: Just again to thank the families who reached out and the educators who reached out since the last meeting. I think we had some really great discussions, and I know that many of the questions that we brought up last meeting are being addressed either by documents that we have received or our discussion tonight as well as individuals who are present in the audience to speak to us. I also wanted to clarify I know there were a few questions regarding my vote of a no on the calendar. It wasn't a no to the professional development; I was just stating that my no was previously voted the first time on the calendar. I am not against professional development for educators. I think this is the exact time that we need additional professional development and collaboration for educators. It was just reiterating my previous vote, so I just wanted to makes sure that that is out there for everyone to hear and clarify why I issued that actual vote of no.
William: In January when we were still meeting person, Andy Churchhill the former Executive Director of the Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative left in the middle of January. We began a robust search that was kind of sidetracked a little bit by the fact that Covid shut everything down. I am pleased to announce that in June we offered the position to Roland Joyal who was an Assistant Superintendent in the Chicopee School system and he accepted and we successfully negotiated a contract. He began in that position on July 1st. I failed to mention that in our previous meeting, and did not inform the committee, so I apologize for that.
Chair: Thank you for that update. That's good to hear that they will be fully staffed and up and running.
William: One more thing, we will be in the Board of Director's meeting next week to discuss what their plan will be for re-entry as we enter into the fall school season.

Opportunities for Visitors to Address the Committee:

Anyone who has connected to this public meeting through the posted link and who would like to address the Committee, please raise your hand through the Zoom Client. The Moderator for the meeting will alert the Chairperson that there is an attendee who wishes to address the Committee.
Chair: At this time I would like to open up the floor for anyone who would like to make a public comment. If there is anyone out in the audience who would like to speak, please raise your hand.
Jennifer Law - 22 Sanford St.: I have two sons, one entering 7th grade and one entering 10th grade. First I want to say thank you to all of you, there is no words to express what you are doing for all of our kids, and you are truly appreciated. I attended Monday night's meeting and I've read through the plan, and I don't see anything regarding the high school students that are either starting or continuing to split their time between East Longmeadow High School and C-Tech. I was just wondering if there was any information regarding that program.
Mr. Smith: Thank you Mrs. Law. C-Tech is looking to see how all the seven member districts are going to ultimately set up, if they are going into a Hybrid look or a remote look or if they are fully in person. They are also probably, but I don't think they voted on this because the collaborative does have their own board and it's made up of members, Mr. Fonseca is actually chair of that board. The board is made of members from the seven districts, the seven school committees of the seven districts. They are looking to see how they are going to be able to best support the schools. I know that they are at least looking at the same type of plans. Would they be able to offer something that is five days a week, what does that look like, but then they are also looking at how they would possibly operate in a Hybrid. I don't know Mr. Fonseca if they are looking at fully remote as well. That is a little bit more challenging when you are talking about hands-on classes.
Mr. Fonseca: I have been in contact the Roland Joyal, he has been calling me. You know the two options I think that are going to be looked at for C-Tech will be both the Hybrid and remote. They are still working with Don Jarvis, Principal of Career Tech on how that might look. As I said, there will be a presentation on next Wednesday night to decide on how the collaborative is going to open in the fall. All seven member districts will be participating in that meeting. I am sure it will be a fruitful discussion on what is in the best interest of all the students.
Steve Vigneux - 397 Pease Rd.: I just wanted to put in one thing that I know you guys will consider, but I wanted to make sure it was on the record, and your deliberations tonight. After listening to the last meeting, after going through a bunch of these plans, from a bunch of different districts, including the one I work for. Once I saw other people, this one, obviously where my children attend school, I think the two most important things for us to keep in mind are safety and equity. The more I heard last time about to me there are clear safety issues.

Regardless of whether you were looking at a full in-person model or a Hybrid model. There were exposure potentials in both of those. The more that I heard about the Hybrid model last time particularly at the high school where I have a student starting in the fall, the idea that high school students who are not being offered busing by the district which would force the hand of many high school parents, me included to have my kids go remote whether that was my choice or not. The fact that they would be going through this Edgenuity and not really even having a "East Longmeadow High School experience" certainly not the kind that their student, their peers were having, who were there in the building. I think on some sort of Hybrid model. I think in addition to safety, which is sort of priority A, I think 1A has to be equity and I think that although none of these solutions are what we would like, we are all acknowledging that. We would all like to be back full-time but it simply not safe to do it right now. And to me looking at those choices, the most equitable of those, obviously looking to the most equitable has to be the remote option.

Chair: Just for some further knowledge, that there has been a concern by a lot of folks and we have addressed it to some extent, that being the opt-out option if we do go Hybrid. We will go into that a little bit further in the discussion.

Kate Dugan - 9 Shaw Street: I spoke last time. I'm just curious I want to think very carefully, or hear you all very carefully about the inevitability of closure, what is that point, I know, I as an educator would like to take the word pivot out of my language forever and I imagine many of you would too and one way to do that would be simply to start fully remote. I've also been thinking a lot about the stress for our students and for our staff and for our families. My daughter and I ride our bikes over at Mapleshade, so we have seen an increasing number of dots which apparently are to indicate where students stand. It just seems very stressful. Remote brings its own stress for sure, but it's a different kind of stress that feels slightly more manageable than dots on a playground. And then the last thing I was thinking about is the capacity of East Longmeadow teachers. Look, when I moved here from Chicago I visited ten different districts and I could live anywhere. I'm a professor at Springfield College and it didn't matter where I lived. I had chosen to live in East Longmeadow because the quality of our schools, our teachers and the support that our staff gives to our students. I know that they can do a good job when supported fully remote. So I would really like to see the committee make that decision. Thank you for taking the time to listen and doing all of, and hard decision making.

Susan Gile - 22 Bayne St.: I sent a letter to most of you some of them got kicked back so I don't know if everyone actually received the email. One of my questions compared to listening to what other districts are doing, I was wondering why in our Hybrid model we were not looking at a kind of zoom and room kind of approach where the students are at home and they are zoomed in or google meted into the actual lesson at least for the mini lesson so that the pacing is addressed and there's less of an issue with kind of keeping up with the material if they are actually in the classroom every single day with their peers. Whether it's through physically in the room or through a virtual model. And I didn't hear anything mentioned about even entertaining that idea on Monday and so I didn't even know if that was even an option.

Chair: Yes Susie, we have had discussions about it. We have come to a somewhat of it's not an option. I don't know Mr. Smith if you want to address that now or later.

Mr. Smith: One of the elements that makes it challenging is that we are going to be utilizing all of our computers across district, and to do something like that we would also have to have some other type of device whether it be a camera or another computer to live stream it. I think one of the other challenges is with something like that is that your teacher is focusing in on the students in front of him or her and working the lesson and sort of managing the class there. I think you are going to no matter how skilled and I think our staff is incredibly skilled, we are going to be doing a disservice to something that is simply streaming the most they might get out of that is the audio and so forth. But it is something the Mr. Thompson said that it has been in the discussions.

Chair: Is there anyone else in the audience who would like to speak? I will now close public comments.

Superintendent's Report:

5.1 ELPS Re-opening Planning for 2020-2021 school year was presented by Mr. Smith

Chair: Mr. Smith, perhaps we can start with some discussions on modifications that we made since the last meeting. We had a lot of concerns and questions, some of them answered and some things have been modified to reflect those concerns. Maybe go through some of them, mostly in regards to the Hybrid model.

Mr. Smith: This plan is continuously evolving. So in the plan we added Health and Safety Protocol. We have individuals that you will be hearing from this evening. We have our ELPS School Physician, Dr. Clarke; EL Director of Health, Amy Petrosky; and our Nurse Leader, Kelly LaBombard. They continue to help us revise the Health and Safety Protocols. We need to put our staff and students in the safest possible conditions. If we go into a Hybrid model, masks will be mandatory for all staff and students. Masks are also mandatory for anyone riding a bus. Safety is our top priority. If we entertain any in-person learning, we all have to make sure that we are monitoring ourselves first for these symptoms and then certainly our children as we get them ready for school. If you are not feeling well, stay home. I just want to highlight, knowing we have to put these safety protocols in place, after Monday's discussion, we added a little bit more detail as we were looking at in-person and measuring this out and putting six feet between desk, where and how we got to certain numbers. Our average number when you go six feet apart averages out to 10-12 desks in a classroom and in some schools they could accommodate 15 desks. The discussion earlier in the week around the opt-out should families choose to opt-out should the school committee decide to start with a Hybrid model we took that to heart. Between Tuesday and today, our staff and planning groups have been working on how we break down the idea that they are opting out, how do we keep students better coordinated and connected to the schools. If students opt-out, and we start in Hybrid we will be making sure that we have educators assigned to those students. At the elementary level, we are at about 18-20% parents thinking about opting out. We might be able to dedicate a core classroom teacher to a group of students in our elementary schools, or a teacher and a few other staff members if it's not a core teacher to work with those individuals to make sure that we are keeping it coordinated with what the in-person learning may be going on for the cohorts who are coming in during the Hybrid. This should make it easier with the transition back and forth. That was certainly a concern on Monday. At the secondary level may still use Edgenuity. And at the high school, what is a robust curriculum in Edgenuity and how does it compare to our courses. How do we transition from opt-out to a more traditional program? If you go back to the index, click on the school (link) you will see what a schedule for in-person looks like and a schedule for at home learning.

At this time, the Chair invited: Amy Petrosky, Dir. of Public Health; Dr. Clarke, School Physician and Kelly LaBombard, Nurse Leader. We did have some conversations with the health professionals today, Superintendent Smith and I.

Amy Petrosky - Community Perspective: I think it's great that we are all working collaboratively to come up with a plan that is in the best interest of all of our community members, students and their families.

Rate of Infection: Where we stand right now is the rate of infection is definitely better now than in April and May. Our total count for the community is 286 confirmed cases. About 2/3 of those were in long-term care setting. So consistently over the course of the pandemic we have been seeing 2/3 of total cases are from those long-term care facilities. Pediatric cases, we had our first two pediatric cases within the last couple of weeks. They were not linked to any kind of cluster/outbreak; they were just two independent cases. Last week our numbers increased, this week the state report has them decreasing. We are staying at those four active cases for this week.

Chair: Amy, can we outline the Protocol, say what happens if a case is suspected or we have a positive test case, what is the protocol from there?

Amy Petrosky: Contract tracing will occur anytime we have a positive student or a positive close contact of a student. Some of the scenario that might occur through this school re-opening/in-person model:

- Jack a 2nd grader, one of his parents or someone that he lives within his house test positive for Covid-19. So what we would do given that this is an elementary school setting, is we would then restrict Jack because he has a household contact who is positive. Given the age group we would restrict all of the cohorts. So then all of his peers would then be asked to be removed. Jack would be tested as a close household contact. Once Jack's test results come back, Jack comes back positive, than all of those cohorts would then need to be tested as close contacts of Jack. If Jack comes back negative, his whole cohort gets to return back to in classroom

learning, but Jack would have to stay out until his 14-day quarantine is up. The 14-day quarantine is necessary because we've seen most infections happen before day 10, but in a small amount cases they have happened up to day 14. That situation is a little bit different when we look at some of the secondary schools like the middle and high schools.

- Since middle and high school will be switching classes, they have different people they are around, it's a lot harder to isolate like a cohort. That would require a situation where I would have lots of conversations with teachers who had that student. I would ask certain things like how was the mask usage in this particular class. And are they maintaining six feet of separation. If we have a classroom that is in compliance and keeping six feet of separation and keeping their masks on then we would remove Jessica from the class and have her get tested, but I don't see the reason to isolate every single person that she had in her classroom. If the teacher responds, you know math class is really not a great time there's a lot of non-compliance when they are hanging out. Or Jessica is have a hard time keeping her mask on, then the situation might be a little bit different. We might look at excluding the people who have been closest to Jessica. Those are the two scenarios on the two grade levels and how far the removal will go.

Ms. Brown: If that art teacher went to other cohorts, what would happen to those other cohorts?

Amy Petrosky: The key decision maker is that contact with a confirmed positive. So that art teacher if they are in the classroom and we don't if Jack's positive yet, we've removed everybody to avoid the outbreak/cluster. So we are being proactive and saying these people could have contacted Jack who was exposed to an unknown contact. We are taking them out of the situation until we know what happens with Jack. If Jack is positive, then that art teacher would be considered a close contact of Jack and that is when we would go that one level further. Until Jack tests positive, that just removing those people who he had that intimate contact with temporarily is the furthest we will need to go.

Ms. Brown: That would also include anyone he rode the bus with?

Amy Petrosky: Yes that is correct, for elementary school, it would be anybody who rode the bus.

Mr. Smith: Let's say Jack and Jessica are siblings, Jack is at the elementary school and Jessica is at the middle school, how does that in terms of them riding two different buses? I'm assuming we would be quarantining the folks on both buses and then we would have to trace through Jessica's passing and so forth as you indicated.

Amy Petrosky: If Jessica is positive, yes. Once a student is positive, that level of restriction is going to expand a lot bigger.

Dr. Welch: There is a question in the CHAT about a student who test positive, who has multiple siblings, can you just reiterate that.

Amy Petrosky: It depends on what grade the siblings are in. So if Jack has a sibling Jeff in third grade, he's still in elementary school, the same thing would happen in Jeff's class as it would in Jack's class. For all the grades that are in elementary school, if there's a close personal contact of one of our elementary age students who is positive, those cohorts would be removed until we can get the test results Jack and Jeff. Jack could be positive and Jeff may not. So Jeff's class can come back. But Jack is still excluded for his 14 days.

Mr. Smith: One of the scenarios we had discussed is, if we get this information during the school day, and you have Jack in the classroom a few hours in, we are assuming that the whole cohort and teacher will now have to go out to quarantine while we are waiting on test results for Jack.

Amy Petrosky: So in a situation where you are already in school eliminating that transfer into your health room will help contain that possible contact. So if we found out at 10AM that Jack's father tested positive, then we keep those kids there and we would dismiss them, I would recommend you dismissing them from that classroom.

Mr. Smith: The protocol from DESE can be somewhat confusing. If you are bringing that entire class in a hallway down to the COVID waiting room, you are also risking exposing other people. We would isolate within the classroom, continue to wear mask, continue to the distancing and contact their parents.

Antonella: Is there a specific place children can go and get tested if they show symptoms?

Amy Petrosky: It would really depend on their pediatrician. The whole cohort wouldn't need to get tested until we got Jack's test results. So only Jack in that initial scenario would need to be tested. If Jack tested positive then everybody would be tested by their pediatrician. Unless you are getting your test results from Baystate or the state lab, we are seeing delays in the testing for up to 10-14 days. From my perspective that will make this a little bit challenging for us to get those kids back in the classroom in a reasonable amount of time. So we may wait up to 10 day, Jack may come back negative and that whole time, those whole groups is waiting outside for those test results. The reason for that is the nation is surging right now where we were back in April and May and the national labs are just so over worked, that it's hard to get those test results. Dr. Clarke has been experiencing with Baystate reference lab and her patients are a 24 - 48 hour turnaround.

Dr. Clarke: That has changed, I tried to schedule kids today with asymptomatic and they were being pushed further out. The turnaround time is still quick. They have spots for asymptomatic testing and those kids who have symptoms will get tested faster and sooner. The positive exposure will get priority. They are being tested in two different places, because they don't want the kids mixing so much with the healthy kids. The list is getting long for asymptomatic testing.

Amy Petrosky: The cases with kids are less robust but still exist. Children have just as much if not more viral load in their swabs as adults do. What that means is our children may not be getting sick, but they are really great at spreading the virus. Kids under five are up to a hundred times more viral load in their swab than adults. That is significant when you think about putting kids into a classroom. Then the kids are bringing what they are being exposed to back into their homes.

Chair: Amy and Dr. Clarke, I know that you have been a part of this process for us, and certainly we are grateful for your input and Kelly as well. Basically we are talking two options tonight, fully remote and Hybrid. I think we can agree that there is a level of exposure that increases from fully remote to the Hybrid. Are all three of you based on what you know about protocol that we are setting up (PPE purchase we have available for staff and student), based on what we know, and the statistics within the state and the protocol that we aligned, have we done that we can do if we come back in a Hybrid model.

Amy Petrosky: We are going to put in every possible protection measure that we are capable of. As a Public Health Professional, the safest route is the fully remote. By if we go Hybrid, we can continue to work until those kids, and even after they are back to make sure every possible safety measure is in place.

Amy Petrosky: One of my biggest concerns is the testing delays. A study from the American Academy of Pediatric say in the last two weeks in July, 40% of all pediatric cases were contracted in those in those two weeks, as we start to see kids come out of their homes into more community-based events.

Chair: Right now testing is being delayed, when do we say testing is fast enough so we've reached it so our students get results in 24 - 49 hours. What is the bar that makes it irrelevant to do the testing?

Dr. Clarke: I think 24-48 hours is the only bar that we can use after that, we are looking 10-14 days with the national labs. That's the isolation anyways, so the whole class will 10-14 days, that's a long time to keep them out from learning. I don't think there is going to be enough tests have the 24-48 turnaround time for us, I think that is kind of unrealistic. Even with the mild increase, they haven't opened up all the testing sites yet and they are not going to that until the load becomes higher.

Dr. Clarke: Just last week asymptomatic could get tested within two days, Monday I was doing remote telemedicine and those kids were getting tested the next day. If you are symptomatic you are still getting tested within 24 hours. But now its 5-7 days testing.

Chair: If we decide to go fully remote, should we have a caveat that if we happen to reach that milestone, if testing becomes readily available, if the viral load comes to an acceptable range, are those really the two factors that might help us in coming back.

Amy Petrosky: We need to look at the community spread, look at testing capacity.

William: When we enter the flu, you have what we call the flu season, do you see a natural spike in COVID cases that would probably happen in relation to the flu.

Dr. Clarke: Yes, I think the same spike is going to happen as with the flu. I think the flu will be later than the COVID spikes.

Amy Petrosky: You might have a kid with cough, fever and headache, are we dealing with a cold, dealing with COVID or flu. And without the

ability to get those test back fast, we are going to be waiting 10 days, to find out what the kid really has and the whole time everybody in that cohort doesn't know what they have been exposed to.

Mr. Smith: Amy puts together a flu clinic, that is something that we really want to encourage, I would imagine.

Dr. Clarke: Yes, I think everybody should get their flu shot as soon as possible.

Amy Petrosky: Mr. Smith, someone had a relevant question I think it's important. What if Jack has siblings and they use the bathroom. If Jack uses the bathroom and then my kid is not in their cohort and they go in and use the bathroom, it doesn't matter because now that pod is broken and everyone is exposed. What they are finding, is that contact touch is way less risky than it is if you have that respiratory droplet transmission. So if Jack uses the bathroom and test positive, even though he touched the door, the faucet and the flusher, that is a much less risky behavior. And I know that Pam and I have been working closely together with disinfections and a process. The schools are working hard to get the proper product, so if we do go Hybrid, that there is safety in that.

Chair: Kelly, can speak from the Nurse's perspective the logistics of if we are in a Hybrid mode, how that might look in each school if we have a reason to believe that one of our students or staff members might have symptoms of COVID?

Kelly LaBombard: So if a student presents with symptoms and they come down to the health room, each school is supposed to have their own medical waiting room. So what we would typically want to happen, is the child would have a mask on, take their temperature, we'd make them wash their hands and do a quick assessment to say could these symptoms be suspicious of COVID.

Then we would need somebody else monitor that room. We don't want them mixed in with other students, so we need to monitor them until their family can pick them up. I do have CNA's; LPN's and nurses that I could put in place to help the nurse. I'm more concerned about a student on the bus and the driver call dispatch and then call the nurse, the nurse has to leave the health room to go get that child or somebody has to be assigned to go get that child off the bus before the kids get off the bus. I've ordered all the PPE's; it's just the details that we have to work out once we know who is available to help in the health room.

Chair: How much PPE's, masks, hand sanitizers have we ordered? Just so the public has an idea of what we already purchased.

Ms. Blair: I have ordered a lot of PPE's, and some of it is still on back order. Some of our stuff is still on backorder. Like disinfecting wipes, as vendors gets these orders, they go to hospitals first and those types of settings. I'm hoping to have those in mid-September. We have ordered electrostatic sprayers for each of our schools that will help with larger cleaning of areas. We ordered about 20,000 disposable face masks, ordered disposable shields.

Kelly LaBombard: We've ordered 975 youth reusable masks. We ordered 500 reusable adult masks. We ordered gowns for the staff that is going to be with students that can't wear a mask or difficulty wearing a mask, like some of the kids in special ed, their teachers may need a gown, or a face mask/shield, gloves. I also ordered mask that you can actually see the mouth for students deaf or really need to see the teacher's face. I ordered those for teachers and staff. Hand sanitizer for each classroom.

Ms. Blair: Yes I believe those are all in, I believe we ordered 400 gallons of refill hand sanitizer.

Dr. Welch: We have provided our staff with adequate protection and so I ordered some additional (mask, shields, gowns, and gloves) specifically for staff in those classrooms so that they would feel we have ample supply. Additionally we've purchased Plexiglas shields for our therapists to use as they are working face to face with some of our students. We purchased those for every school.

Chair: So Dr. Welch if we do go fully remote, you would still recommend that we have developed an in-person program for some students.

Dr. Welch: We would offer it Greg that is still the expectation from the state assistant commissioner and the state director for student services. We would offer it, and if families wanted to access it we would certainly look at a way to make sure that we were meeting the student needs. But that we were also being respectful of the model that was in place so it would be a possibility, yes.

Chair: We have the staff and transportation for that.

Dr. Welch: We already have transportation in place and as far as staff I would have to defer to whatever decisions they made and make my decision/determine how I would get those services to students.

Mr. Smith: When someone has a cold are we moving into it thinking that it's COVID? We have to treat everything that has those similar symptoms as a possible COVID situation?

Dr. Clarke: I think the problem is the child who has a cold. Basically, there is no testing for the cold. So we would have to test every child with upper respiratory symptoms for COVID. The one who has the flu is actually better off one, we are presuming that they only have one disease so if they test positive for the flu, we are deciding they don't have COVID. I think that is what we are going with right now. So if you have the flu and get treated, you could technically return to school much sooner than if you had COVID. If you have cold, and we test you for COVID it depends on the turnaround for the COVID. We will be testing most kids as if they have COVID.

Chair: If we go fully remote, the potential is that we are out for the full year, because not much will change. We won't have enough vaccines for people to be vaccinated for a least a year. So we are talking about the lack of socialization, the lack of normal routine, the inability for our staff and educators to meet new student of the school year. Would it be fair to say, if we were to have smaller groups, not even a full cohort, say four to five students come in two to three times the first couple of weeks of school to meet with their teachers fully masked, complete social distancing for just an hour or so, where the educator could meet the students and have some socialization with other students kind of meet some of that criteria on a very limited basis and then go fully remote. Is there a big concern with small groups of five to six students who practice social distancing with masks?

Amy Petrosky: One of the things we can do in that option is do that outside. We do know that it is safer outside, then being in an enclosed place. That seems safe and reasonable to me given that they are outside.

Dr. Clarke: I agree, the smaller groups are better. The only ideal is keeping them home. Outside is the best option in small groups.

Sarah Truoiolo: Question about the re-evaluation process. Say we entered into a remote only model what would a recommendation be for re-evaluating when we go back potentially into a Hybrid and a different phase to bringing students back. Would that be based on every semester or on your professional opinions or should we be checking in every 6-8 weeks, what do you think about that?

Amy Petrosky: I think we are going to see a trend. Southern schools are already going in. Five key indicators: capacity at hospitals; testing capacity; turnaround time, those levels is what the governor is using to move through those phases. I think we would mirror something similar to that and use that as our basis to communications. If we see rates continue to be as low as they are and in communities that have gone back into school and there hasn't been a huge amount of surge, using their information would be a great tool for us. COVID is new; we don't know what it's going to do. Also watching the re-infection rate. So many unknown.

Sarah Truoiolo: We should have Dr. Clarke; Amy and Kelly at our meetings once a month.

Elizabeth Marsian-Boucher: Dr. Clarke my biggest concern is about keeping the kids home and the whole socialization of that. We have fantastic counselors and adjustment counselors, have you been noticing an increase in your patients coming in with social emotional issues and depression? My biggest fear is the unseen, unrecognized abuse that isn't getting seen by teachers.

Dr. Clarke: I'm seeing two groups of kids who have high anxiety, who are not successful in school. They have done incredibly well staying home. Excelled somewhat socially because that distance of the screen they tend to use is helping them move along fine. The other group, they are staying the course, they are able to connect with their friends, and they are doing fine. And there is the group that is suffering. Very anxious, the world is going to end for them. I explain to them, we are all having this issue. I haven't had to do a lot of referrals for those children. Small intervention seems to work for them, exercise, being outside. Not sure what's going to happen when winter come. Need to get in front of that.

Dr. Welch: What we need to be doing is staying in communication with families and encouraging them to reach out to us if they are seeing something we may not capture during a Hybrid or remote mode. I know the schools have opportunities for families to reach out, and the counselors are going to be engaged and involved. Our teachers are incredible, sensitive and know their students well. Day to day interaction is going to be incredibly important.

Heather: Dr. Welch, thank you for saying that, our teachers are amazing. The work they did in the remote learning this spring was absolutely amazing. Helping families with internet access and Chromebook, teachers and staff are doing amazing things.

Chair: The Chair thanked the health professionals, I am so grateful for all the time you've given to this community and the kids of our district. This is a tough decision to make, but with the information you provided, we are well educated on this situation. Thank you for all your time this evening and with all the prior work you've done. Going forward, we appreciate your willingness to work with us.

Chair: We have a general idea with the two models we are looking at, either a fully remote or with a hybrid.

Remote: Opportunity for very small groups of students to come in and meet their teachers, perhaps if successful, even maybe once a month we could develop that as we go forward. I think with that option we provide a chance of socialization and some normalcy.

Elizabeth: I was wondering about the food service. You know the free and reduce can be a difficult thing for some families to ask for, to get. How are we going to do that moving forward if we do remote, how is that going to work out.

Mr. Smith: In March, we partnered with Springfield. We provided information as to where various areas, where they could pick-up a grab and go meal. The most recent survey we sent out to parents asked who would be interested in participating in the grab and go meals. We would set this up, a grab and go either at the high school or Birchland Park

Antonella: I think we should do the survey again if we go fully remote.

Mr. Smith: Great point, we are going to need final numbers. In this survey, we should also ask, who might need a Chromebook.

Lori Pahl: I have been in contact with my staff they are ready and willing and able to go in any direction that is chosen. I have been working individually with each school principal for the different re-opening possibilities. If full remote, we do need to offer grab and go meals, not only for the free and reduce, but we are federally funded program, so we do have to offer it to everybody. There are some families struggling, so if it's available, we will have it prepared and ready for them. If it's Hybrid, I've been working with the principal to come up with the best safest plan to have meals for all of our kids.

Ms. Blair: If folks out there do some help, it is confidential program. We are here to help you, so I just wanted to reiterate that.

Dr. Welch: If the parents feel more comfortable to reach out to their teachers, they have been very helpful with some families, getting food and supplies they need. They are very good at advocating for our students. There are a lot of ways families can communicate to us, and we will take care of that.

Sarah: If students are not able to come on based on the revised schedule, not able to come on at the times of live instruction do we have a backup plan for them? Or have we talked to ELEA about potentially adjusting some teachers work schedules to accommodate coming on with students after hours because both families may be at work and there's nobody present to have a child log on to a device. Are we recording some of these lessons if a child misses live instruction are they able to watch that once a family member is home to facilitate the learning that can happen, because if we even move to fully remote, we don't know that we are going to have adults present in the homes that can actually facilitate the learning or ensure that kids are logging on. And that could be kindergartners all the way through middle and high school. I just want to make sure that we have those contingency plans in place. What do we do if the families can't accommodate the schedules that we are creating for live instruction?

Mr. Smith: These are discussions that are ongoing with ELEA. We are problem solving at the building level. We do have some staff members who do film lessons and have ready when they have absences. We have other staff members that use Google Classroom to make sure that they have all the information set for predominantly students who have missed class, or may be out for a few days. We would look at what we used in the past and make that even more efficient as we move forward.

Sarah: I'm looking at more structured. What if my child is in a class where the teacher isn't regularly adhering to a practice such as that, and I might not necessarily have that support built in. So if my husband and I are back at work, and there is not someone there who is monitoring and actively engaging in the learning alongside the child. That's when we need to ensure that we have that consistent practice whether it's identifying a lead teacher, or utilizing the department heads, thinking of ways that we can safeguards in place so that regardless of setting, regardless of what children have access at home, they are not missing out on the opportunity to move forward with curricula so that they are not missing out on the opportunity to continue to addressing grade level standards like their peers would be.

Mr. Smith: That makes sense to continue those conversations and planning to make sure that we have things in place.

Sarah: If we were to come back in a remote model, have we considered bringing the youngest of students back, spreading them across the district, is that something that we have any possibility to do? Learning to read in K-1st grade and socializing in school. If we came back remote 3-12th grade, would we have the capacity to spread our K-2 students across the remaining classroom within the district?

Mr. Smith: All these things can be considered, we haven't planned out each one of those scenarios. Our focus has been on the three models we have been discussing. If we have an idea of what we are endorsing tonight, now we have time to start to look at other ways we can become more efficient in that model.

Chair: If we go fully remote and decide potentially to revisit a January 1st time frame, part of that decision to revisit may be something different other than the Hybrid model that we are showing right now. It could be something that looks like that or could base that on what happens in other school districts.

Elizabeth: If we go remote, the schedule is going to be tough. We can see what we can do with those families that maybe are having trouble with it. The kids and parents have to understand, if this goes remote, this is school. There are expectations in school and those expectations need to be followed through, they are set by the teachers and school system, what we expect. If we go back, we need to discuss this at every meeting, how's going, what do we need, how can we help the kids, what do we need help with. Having constant conversations all year and those are positive.

William: I look at it the same way. This is a first step in a very complex, multi-step system. There is some value in some sort of socialization at the beginning of the year so that kids can get used to the curriculum, teachers, and some of their peers in small groups. I like the idea of revisiting this at Christmas with the help of health professionals to continue to guide us. I like Sarah's idea with getting monthly reports from them to see where the trends are. I like local data.

Antonella: I agree with Greg, meeting with students beforehand to go over routines and procedures for the students. And making sure that the expectations are clear about assignments, about times being met. The expectations are for the students and making sure that the parents know what the expectations are, to make it more successful. I think we might want to revisit this before Christmas, because we don't know what is going to happen. We don't know what the trends are going to be like. Maybe it will be better before Christmas.

Chair: I threw out the January 1st date because I wanted to give our staff at least some indication or some stability of what the next couple of months will look like. If we get two months of health data, we can start to look at this in November to come back in January if that is feasible. Not sure if we will be able to do that, or what else would change, say a vaccine that is widely distributed. We could find that other districts are very successful, there's low exposure and viral spread. We have low transmission and low numbers right now in the state. I don't know what else would change to get us back in.

Sarah: We need to put some contingency plans in place for families who are now potentially both going back to work. Then we are going to end up with kids who are going to have large gaps. Not every family is going to be starting at 7:23 or 8:30, based on families having to go to work.

Elizabeth: Where are these kids going to be Sarah, I agree with you.

Sarah: They could be with grandparents, and maybe a grandparent isn't capable of monitoring a child online. Making sure they are adhering to their work. Or may with a daycare provider. If in a daycare setting, they might not be able to log kids on to devices. I just think it's a reality that some of families in our town may be faced with. Think creative and out of the box ways to be able to support as many kids as possible. Lots of situations that we may not know about.

Elizabeth: Maybe work with the union, teacher on every grade level, then that student has to be with that teacher too. If we are going to

record something it can be done afterwards, technically that needs to get fixed afterwards. Opportunity to meet in those small little groups of zoom meetings with your peers is really important. I think that is something these kids will miss out on, if they are watching a video later on. That's my concern, the socialization piece of it.

Heather: I will be having some training for families around these issues. I also wanted to say, we might have some staff that are in a similar situation where they have kids at home that might be interested in a different schedule.

Sarah: Are we going to be all set with devices?

Mr. Smith: We have already begun that planning knowing that every district is racing against time purchasing technology. We will be ready to open. Process in place as we get new devices, how we can swap out and provide the newer devices.

Sarah: Will we be talking about where the teachers will be teaching from after a vote takes place or how will those negotiations move forward with ELEA. If we go remote, will the teachers be coming into the classrooms to teach from their classrooms?

Mr. Smith: This will all be in the discussion we scheduled with ELEA.

Chair: So the question on the table in terms of reopening would be a fully remote program where students would not be coming back, we would potentially have the opportunity to bring them back in small groups a few times at the beginning of the year for some socialization and to get to know their teachers. Or the other option would be to go Hybrid model, where we'd have two cohorts, we would break the student population in half. Half would come in on Monday and Tuesday, Wednesday would be remote learning, and Thursday and Friday the other half. When the students are not in the classroom, they would be learning remotely.

Antonella: In the first option, would you want to add that we would revisit it in a certain amount time frame.

William: The option to revisit at any time would be sufficient.

Chair: I would like to give our staff a date, an opportunity to do some real planning, so if we were to go remote, I like that January 1st date. That gives us about three and half months.

Elizabeth: We should have discussion monthly.

Chair: To Beth's point, start discussions end of October, early November if we are shooting for January 1st. Make a decision first week of December at the latest, giving families and staff plenty of notice.

Elizabeth: Why next start if we come when it's the start of the high school second semester.

Chair: We decide by December 15th and start January 15th. So to that point, Gordon, Pam, and Heather, does that schedule make sense, do you see any flaws in at least trying to revisit and look at those dates? We revisit end of November, make a decision in December and transition, if able to come in for January 15th

Mr. Smith: I agree with the comments that have been throughout, that at least one meeting a month should be a standing item.

Ms. Blair: You've already asked Dr. Clarke, Amy and Kelly to join you on a monthly basis and they are more than willing to do that. They will inform you so that you can make those decisions going forward.

William moved to start the school year fully remote , revisiting this on a monthly basis, making a decision by December 15th on what we are going to do for the second half of the year beginning on January 15th. Including small group sessions at the beginning of the year to be held outside if possible as recommended by the health officials.

Chair: May be inside as well, social distancing, fully masked and relying on our health professionals to assist us in exactly how that looks as well as discussions with our staff to make sure it 's logistically feasible.

Mr. Smith: As Dr. Welch mentioned earlier, we will still have a certain part of our population that we are going to have to plan for that may have some different programing than the fully remote.

William: And we will work with the Director of Student Services, Dr. Welch with high priority students , Elizabeth seconded the motion.

Chair: Any further discussion, hearing none, all those in favor say aye (5), those oppose say nay (0), motion carries (5-0) to start the school year fully remote. We will make every effort to have some small group sessions with students and teachers if possible. And we will revisit the potential to change the situation for January 15th and we will be making that decision by December 15th. Dr. Welch, we will work with the students that you see fit on meeting their needs in person.

Chair: Very worthwhile discussion, I would like to acknowledge all the staff members and our health professionals that have put endless hours in to provide us with the information needed to make a decision. I am comfortable with this decision, and it appears that we all are. And it took all that to get me there so I thank everybody for their time and I look forward to a new challenge of a new school year.

Sarah: I would like to know what is being offered for those PD days during those ten days. We have a series of courses that are being offered.

Is that up for teachers to opt into or are administrators working to say these educators should be placed into this course, how is that working in terms of selection process.

Heather: For the ten days we have to balance time to give them time to plan as well as the tools that they need. In the works right now, I want to provide remote learning tools. And more specific tools for specific grades. In addition there will be PD opportunities, again this is all still in draft with Edgenuity, Albert i-o, 6-12 grade will be using that as well as iReady. Also, talking about how to give the diagnostic at home utilizing some of the tools NetTop that allows us to freeze the screen and monitor what kids are doing.

Sarah: Is the district planning to say some these PD are mandated for certain educators based on either them not taking it in the past or what is going to be required of them moving forward or based on it being a new program for the district?

Heather: Some of these are going to be specific for certain grade levels, the expectation would be that we would all be there so we can all be on the same page.

Sarah: Would educators be in the building? So that they are able to utilize their materials as they need them while planning with other teachers or engaging in one of the PD sessions?

Heather: All of the vendors are providing these remotely and virtually, the PD is designed to be virtual.

Sarah: Are we gathering attendance records from who is actually signing up and then attending the actual virtual sessions. Are we keeping that log for the principals?

Heather: We need to keep that log anyways pdp's. One of the nice features in google meet is one of the add-ons. It actually automatically takes attendance as long as people are logged into the district. I will be attending all of these to make sure people get credit for attending.

Chair: We will message out to the families.

Mr. Smith: Yes, here is our plan, and the schools will also message out.

Elizabeth: What about all those forms that we give out at the beginning of schools.

Mr. Smith: We are working to put them on line.

Elizabeth: Making sure all the MB families have an email.

Heather: Blooms for the elementary, a program to allow us to communicate with the parents. Emails for 6-12. Working really hard this summer to streamline everything.

Elizabeth: We need to utilize all and any staff

Assistant Superintendent of Business Report

Old Business: None

New Business

William moved to adjourn at 8:28P.M., Elizabeth seconded the motion.

Chair: Any further discussion? All those in favor say aye (5), those oppose (0), motion carries (5-0)

Minutes Recorded by: Kathy Celetti

Respectfully submitted by: Superintendent Smith

Signature