

**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 12, 2021  
**TIME:** 4:00 P.M.  
**WHERE:** Superintendent's Conference Room

Meeting called to Order by: Sarah Truoiolo, Chair

Chair stated that this meeting is being both audio and video taped, and asked if anyone else was taping the meeting.

Roll Call: Elizabeth Marsian-Boucher, Antonella Raschilla, Gordon Smith, Superintendent of Schools, William Fonseca, Gregory Thompson, Kathy Celetti, Recording Secretary. Absent: Pamela Blair, Assistant Superintendent for Business

**Approval of Minutes**

**Opportunities for visitors to address the Committee:**

Mr. Justin McCarthy - 84 Porter Road.

Mr. McCarty stated that he had some concerns with the guidance that has been issued by DESE based on the CDC guidance. I am opposed to those guidelines. I want to emphasize two things, one is parental consent. If you impose this, I hope you honor the parent's rights to reject these test. The CDE states in the very last line of their guidance, this is more of a burden on small children, and it should be implemented with older children. The burden of testing is likely higher for younger children, therefore testing may be more feasible and acceptable for older children and adolescence. I ask that you do not implement this, if you do, give us the right to say no as individuals and if you are going to do it, stick with the older kids, and leave the younger children alone. The vaccinated are excluded from all of this (testing and quarantines), but if you look at the CDC's own guidance, they state that fully vaccinated people can get infected even with the delta variant. Preliminary evidence suggests that fully vaccinated people who are infected with the delta variant can be infectious and spread the virus to others. If vaccinated people can get infected and spread the virus to everyone in the schools, why would they not be tested and quarantine if they are exposed to the virus. If we go to the extreme of testing all these kids for .001% transmission, then we should also test and quarantine vaccinated people who could be spreading this in the schools just as easily as the unvaccinated.

**Committee/Sub-committee Communications**

**William:** Great job, I attended National Night Out a couple weeks ago. Great job by everybody involved, Chief Williams, Mr. Maki. Great turnout, people just wanted to get out. It was a beautiful night, couldn't ask for a better night. It was just fun, everybody looked like they were having a great time.

**Sarah:** Great collaboration between ELCAT. Don and Jaime did a terrific job running a summer camp that allowed kids to take on Sports Broadcasting. It was such a nice collaboration between the Rec Dept. and a function of the school department. Our son had attended and had a terrific time. I saw the video up on ELCAT and it was really nice treat to see, so thank you ELCAT Don and Jaime for taking that on in the summer, because I know the kids who attended definitely enjoyed it.

**Superintendent:** I believe Mr. Maki has some campers out at National Night Out.

**Superintendent's Report:**

**Assistant Superintendent of Business Report :**

**Old Business:**

**New Business:**

7.1 DESE Fall Re-opening Guidance - Dr. Clarke and Ms. Kelly LaBombard

DESE and CDC guidelines are recommending students K-6 wear a mask indoors, if outside and can't distance wear a mask. Grades 7-12 any unvaccinated students and staff should wear a mask. Pool testing was not recommended last year. MASC is recommending School Committee adopt a Face Covering Policy requirements for K-12.

Mr. Smith: We will be utilizing outdoor space. Ms. Blair secured some tents for each of the schools.

Ms. LaBombard: We only had one case during our summer school program.

Mr. Smith: One close contact became a positive.

Dr. Clarke: Numbers are going up with people out and about. Increase in kids being hospitalized. Testing is available in the doctor's office.

Elizabeth: What is the effectiveness of the BinaxNOW, do they give positive results?

Dr. Clarke: They give both a positive and negative results.

Mr. Smith: We need to continue with the daily self-inventory of our bodies for both families and staff. The policy from DESE last year still stands. Lunches outside, aim for six feet (Elementary) and three feet for (Middle and HS).

Dr. Clarke: Risk with younger kids K-6, less if vaccinated.

Ms. LaBombard: K-12 (masks), numbers are going up.

Dr. Clarke: I agree with Kelly, (mask).

Gregory: We are not going to mandate mask.

Elizabeth: It should be a parental choice.

William: This is going to get worse before it gets better.

Mr. Smith: Distance, handwashing, bring mask to school (option) for students.

Gregory: We should follow those seven (7) guidelines from DESE

- DESE and DPH strongly recommend that all students in K-6 wear masks when indoors, except students who cannot do so due to medical conditions or behavioral needs. (masks are not necessary outdoors and may be removed while eating indoors)
- DESE and DPH also strongly recommend that unvaccinated staff in all grades, unvaccinated students in grades 7-12 and unvaccinated visitors wear masks indoor, in alignment with the statewide advisory on masking.
- DESE and DPH recommend that schools allow vaccinated students to remain unmasked.
- Any individual at higher risk for severe disease from COVID or with a household member who is at high risk is encouraged to mask regardless of vaccination status consistent with the updated DPH Advisory on Face Coverings and Masks.
- Any child or family who prefers to mask at school should be supported in this choice.
- By federal public health order, all students and staff are required to wear masks on school buses at this time.

- All staff and students must wear masks while in school health offices. Additional guidance for school health professionals is forthcoming from DPH.

**Gregory** moved to accept the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Department of Public Health recommendations on masking. To strongly recommend that students who are unvaccinated wear a mask while inside the school and recommend that schools allow vaccinated students to remain unmasked, based on DESE guidance released on July 30<sup>th</sup> and that would be to begin this school year, subject to change with new data. Seconded by **Elizabeth**.

**Chair**: Any further discussion?

**Gregory**: We are not going to mandate that anyone wear a mask, we will make these recommendations. It's highly recommended but that doesn't mean it's required. I want to be clear about that, because what we don't want to do is ostracize anyone on their mask choices whether they choose to wear a mask or not wear a mask. I do believe that it's going to get worse and we are going to all have to mask up. We will accept it then, and we will do it happily for the safety of our students. But we have some time in for our staff and our students to not be mandated with masks, I think we should take it.

**Gregory**: We have younger students who parents want their students masked and the teachers should be notified that that family wishes for that student to be masked throughout the day.

**Superintendent**: The easiest way to communicate that is throughout health offices because that's where you know we have different individual health plans, that's where we are talking about possibly allergies and all of the above. So we add that to something that the nurses are tracking and sharing with teachers.

**Chair**: I think that is something we have to bring back and make sure that we have the capacity and that we have those lines of communications. So I would be interested to see at the next meeting if that's something the leadership team is in agreement with because again, you are going to have kids coming off of buses with a mask on who may not be required to wear that mask based on how this vote goes when they are actually in the classroom. So we just want to make sure that this is really clear. We are going to have kids arriving at our doors with masks on based on the guidance relative to busing, but then depending on how our vote goes might not be required to wear that mask once they enter the building.

**Superintendent**: I thought the communication that we are talking about was if families would like their child to wear the mask throughout the day, to make sure that the school is aware of that and that we are informing the classroom teacher of that so that similar to other medical needs that the teacher is aware that the parent of the student would really like the child to wear the mask throughout the day. Not so much the bus situation.

**Chair**: I'm just saying in terms of are you going to want to bring that back to the leadership team to make sure that's how they want this information to flow. I don't want to make a statement now if that's going to change relative to each one of the schools.

**Superintendent**: I plan to bring this back to both the leadership team and the nurses to make sure that that is something that they can do. It's easier to share that information with our nurses then to try and share that with a teacher.

**Chair**: Any further discussion, hearing none, all those in favor say aye (5) all those oppose say nay (0), motion carries (5-0).

Chair: Thank you everyone

William moved to adjourn at 5:20 P.M. Elizabeth seconded the motion.

Chair: 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