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PEMBROKE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, August 17, 2021
Pembroke High School Library

7:00 PM

Call to Order

Mr. Tropeano called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Present from Administration: Erin Obey, Superintendent; Marybeth Brust, Assistant Superintendent; Jessica DeLorenzo, Director of Student Services

Present from Committee: Michael Tropeano, Chair; David Boyle, Vice Chair; Susan Bollinger, Secretary; Susie Scholl and Lance Kennedy

Acknowledge & Schedule Visitors

Mr. Tropeano welcomed the audience members.

Adjustments to Agenda

None

Approval of Bill Schedule

Warrants were sent out electronically for approval.

Superintendent's Report

Discussion on DESE Recommendations for Return to Learn

Mrs. Obey provided guidance from CDC, American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), DPH and DESE. CDC guidance advises universal masking in grades K-12 vaccination or unvaccinated and at least three feet of space at all times. AAP recommendations are similar to CDC with universal masking in K-12. Two organizations have the authority to create a mandate in the State of Massachusetts for masking of school children and that is the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) as well as the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH). The Pembroke Board of Health also has the ability to create a mask mandate for the local community. At this time DESE is recommending that all students in grades K-6 are masked along with all other unvaccinated individuals in a school setting. There are two federal mask mandates which include transportation and health offices at all times. The committee conducted a community survey for feedback on the DESE recommendations. There were about 1200 responses and about 80% were parents/caregivers, about 11% staff and 7% students. Mrs. Obey said her recommendation is to follow the DESE and DPH recommendations. 63% are in favor of masking, just under 30% are not comfortable and in the other category 3% are against all masking and 3.9% are torn. Overall there is about 2/3 in favor of adopting the DESE recommendation and 1/3 against it. Parents/caregivers made up 966 of the responses and about 66% are in favor of the DESE guidance and about 30% against it. Survey data of just elementary parents/caregivers shows 64% in favor, 32% against and 4% in the other category. Regarding the universal mask mandate preK-12, about 67% are against it, about 30% in favor.

The Test to Stay protocol, which would require parent consent, outlined by DESE allows those that are unvaccinated and identified as close contacts to remain in school as opposed to quarantining at home. Just over 56% percent said they were in favor of it. The portion of those that said no was because they felt the test to stay protocol should apply to all individuals just not the unvaccinated.

Lisa Cullity said 50% in the 12-15 old range are fully vaccinated and 75% in the 16-19 age range are fully vaccinated. She said most Plymouth County schools are moving forward with the DESE guidance. There have been 50 cases of the virus since July 1st and 15 were children but six were not even school age. Three cases were in childcare facilities and there was no transmission as a result. Two staff in recenter center program were positive and there was no additional transmission although one staff was present at work during their infectious period. Mrs. Obey said there were no positive cases in PPS summer programs and Y. Mrs. Cullity said a congregate care setting in Pembroke had two positive staff in the last month but no transmission. 12 recent cases were vaccinated people and three didn't know they were sick, and the others had mild symptoms including the children. She said she will be concerned if people get seriously ill and/or there is community spread. From May to end of July there were next to no cases, but August increased because some people traveled, and some cases were in the same household.

Mrs. Obey said the school committee will take a vote tonight. The district will continue with best practices from last year even though it is not required. It will continue to maintain space of three feet or greater in all indoor settings, continue handwashing protocols, sanitation and disinfection protocols, air quality monitoring, leniency with attendance policy during first semester, utilization of outdoor spaces whenever possible, and maintain the COVID dashboard on the website.

Mrs. Obey said the definition of a close contact has not change and it is individual that has been within 6 feet of space of a COVID19 positive case for more than 15 minutes cumulatively in a 24 hour period. What has changed is now asymptomatic vaccinated close contacts do not need to quarantine or test but must monitor themselves for symptoms for at least 14 days. For asymptomatic unvaccinated close contacts the quarantine and testing guidance is the same as it was in the spring so if you are not testing you must quarantine for 10 days, and you can return to school on day 11 as long as you continue to be asymptomatic and you must yourself for symptoms for at least 14 days. If you test you would need to test on day 5 or later and with a negative test result you may return on day 8. New this year is the DESE Test to stay protocol where asymptomatic unvaccinated individuals identified as a close contact may test to stay in school instead of quarantining. Individuals would be tested each morning by the school nurse for five school days following the known exposure, using the BinaxNOW rapid antigen test. Symptomatic vaccinated and unvaccinated close contacts do need to test or quarantine.

Mrs. Obey said she is recommending a case metric for this year which is schools with less than 600 students (NPES, HES, BES, PCMS) there would be a universal indoor mask mandate for a period of 10 days for all student and staff regardless of vaccination status when the number of active cases is greater than 10. For PHS, which is a larger population, active cases greater than 15. The elementary level would flip to 100% remote for a period of 10 days if there are more than five positive cases in a classroom.

Mrs. Scholl asked about quarantining students and Mrs. Obey said there will be a check in with a teacher/staff member and google classroom work. Mrs. Scholl asked Mrs. Cullity where Pembroke is in the bell curve in comparison to other towns, and she said it is hard to know but it helps that much of Pembroke is vaccinated. Mrs. Scholl asked what designation Pembroke is, green, yellow, red and she said those designations are no longer being used and Plymouth County is considered high transmission.

Mr. Boyle asked about transportation requirements and Mrs. Obey said students have to been masked due to federal guidelines and will not be considered close contacts because of the masks and open windows. Mr. Boyle asked about the cost of the Test to Stay protocol and Mrs. Obey said tests are free from the State but if additional staff is needed to administer the tests the costs could fall under CARES funding.

Mrs. Bollinger asked about the summer programs protocols as there were no instances of concern and Mrs. Obey said all PPS programs were mask optional and there were students and staff that chose to wear them.

Mr. Tropeano confirmed there were no cases in the summer programs. He asked the protocols around travel and Mrs. Cullity said to use common sense and minimize contact during travel and stay home if not feeling well as the quarantine rules for travel have expired. Mr. Tropeano asked about the rapid test and confirmed the PCR will trump a rapid positive. Mrs. Cullity advised to follow up a positive rapid test with a PCR test.

Mr. Finley spoke in favor of a mask mandate at the very least for elementary students.
Mr. Tiro thanked the committee for their work.
Mr. Beard spoke against a mask mandate.

Mrs. Glennon spoke in favor a mask mandate at least for the K-6.

Mrs. McMarrow spoke against a mask mandate.

Mr. Quigley said the Test to Stay protocol sounds fantastic. He said he is most concerned about his student losing more time in class because of the virus.

Mr. Sesnoise spoke against a mask mandate.

Mrs. Jacee spoke against a mask mandate.

Mr. Tropeano said the three entities, the DPH, DESE and BOH, have the power to mandate masks but they have not, and they are the experts. Mrs. Cullity said keep in mind the decision tonight could be changed based on data changes. Mr. Tropeano said MIAA is not recommending masks, they are letting it be a local decision.

VOTE: On a motion made by David Boyle and seconded by Susie Scholl, it was unanimously voted to rescind policy EBCFA and follow the superintendent's recommendation to follow the DESE guidelines on masking.

Voting Yes: Michael Tropeano, David Boyle, Susie Scholl, Lance Kennedy and Susan Bollinger

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: none

VOTE: On a motion made by Susie Scholl and seconded by Lance Kennedy, it was unanimously voted to conceptually approve the Test to Stay protocol as outlined by DESE.

Voting Yes: Michael Tropeano, David Boyle, Susie Scholl, Lance Kennedy and Susan Bollinger

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: none

Communications

River Marsh 40b Project Update

Mrs. Obey said the committee's concerns were the enrollment impact to NPES and transportation. The response from the project did not address the concerns and Mr. Tropeano asked the superintendent to send them another letter asking them to respond to those concerns.

Consideration for Approval: School Committee Meeting Minutes of June 29, 2021 and July 13, 2021

VOTE: On a motion made by Susan Bollinger and seconded by Lance Kennedy, it was unanimously voted to approve the school committee meeting minutes of June 29 and July 13, 2021.

Voting Yes: Michael Tropeano, David Boyle, Susie Scholl, Lance Kennedy and Susan Bollinger

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: none

Consideration for Approval: PCMS Surplus Materials

Mrs. Obey said they are outdated so the company does not want to them back so the district is looking at donating, if possible, otherwise they will be recycled. Deeming surplus means disposing in the best manner.

VOTE: On a motion made by David Boyle and seconded by Susie Scholl, it was unanimously voted to approve the PCMS surplus materials as presented.

Voting Yes: Michael Tropeano, David Boyle, Susie Scholl, Lance Kennedy and Susan Bollinger

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: none

Consideration for Approval Student Handbooks: Elementary, PCMS, & PHS

Mrs. Obey said no substantive changes for elementary handbook. PCMS recommendation is for no lockers again this year and changes to the dress code. PHS handbook has an addition of language that outlines the possession of or dissemination of sexually explicit photographs or videos, aka sexting. Also, the word "distributing" has been added to purchasing under the illegal substances section.

VOTE: On a motion made by Lance Kennedy and seconded by Susan Bollinger, it was unanimously voted to approve the elementary, PCMS and PHS Student Handbooks for 2021-2022 school year with amendments as presented waiving policy BGB.

Voting Yes: Michael Tropeano, David Boyle, Susie Scholl, Lance Kennedy and Susan Bollinger
Voting No: none
Abstaining: none
Absent: none

Consideration for First Read: ESSER III Stakeholder Survey

Mr. Tropeano said a requirement of the grant is to survey the community.

VOTE: On a motion made by Susan Bollinger and seconded by Susie Scholl, it was unanimously voted to approve the ESSER III Stakeholder Survey as a first read as presented.

Voting Yes: Michael Tropeano, David Boyle, Susie Scholl, Lance Kennedy and Susan Bollinger
Voting No: none
Abstaining: none
Absent: none

Consideration for Approval: Administrator FY22 Salary Grid

Mr. Tropeano said this sets the salary schedule for 21-22.

VOTE: On a motion made by Susie Scholl and seconded by David Boyle, it was unanimously voted to approve the FY22 Administrator Salary Grid as presented.

Voting Yes: Michael Tropeano, David Boyle, Susie Scholl, Lance Kennedy and Susan Bollinger
Voting No: none
Abstaining: none
Absent: none

Discussion of Fall Town Meeting Warrant Articles:

Creation and funding of a SPED Stabilization Account

Mr. Tropeano said this will allow one time revenues for special education expenses that could arise.

VOTE: On a motion made by David Boyle and seconded by Susan Bollinger, it was unanimously voted to submit two articles to Town meeting with regard to establishing and funding with \$150k a special education stabilization fund with \$150k coming out of free cash based upon the School Committee return of funds.

Voting Yes: Michael Tropeano, David Boyle, Susie Scholl, Lance Kennedy and Susan Bollinger
Voting No: none
Abstaining: none
Absent: none

CPC Applications for Field Projects & Hatch Building

Mr. Tropeano said the plan is to seek CPC funds for Phase 2 at \$75k for renovation of the PHS varsity softball and the beginning of the renovation of the varsity baseball field. This would return high school baseball to the high school campus from Mattakesett field and shift junior varsity to Mattakesett. The teams could practice at the PHS field and not have to travel.

There is also a CPC request for \$15k to have a study done at the hatch building to look at what the potential renovation cost would be.

VOTE: On a motion made by David Boyle and seconded by Lance Kennedy, it was unanimously voted to approve the submission of the CPC articles.

Voting Yes: Michael Tropeano, David Boyle, Susie Scholl, Lance Kennedy and Susan Bollinger
Voting No: none
Abstaining: none
Absent: none

Planning for the other funds returned as part of FY21 close out

Mrs. Obey said the funds will be requested for HVAC units as a capital item at fall town meeting.

VOTE: On a motion made by Susie Scholl and seconded by Susan Bollinger, it was unanimously voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit another Town meeting article for two HVAC units which will be funded by free cash that was returned by the school at the FY21 closeout.

Voting Yes: Michael Tropeano, David Boyle, Susie Scholl, Lance Kennedy and Susan Bollinger
Voting No: none
Abstaining: none
Absent: none

Future Meeting Dates and Topics

8/31/21

VOTE: At 9:51PM, on a motion made by David Boyle and seconded by Lance Kennedy, it was unanimously voted, to adjourn.

Voting Yes: Michael Tropeano, David Boyle, Susie Scholl, Lance Kennedy and Susan Bollinger
Voting No: none
Abstaining: none
Absent: none

APPROVED: September 14, 2021

MOTIONS

VOTE: On a motion made by David Boyle and seconded by Susie Scholl, it was unanimously voted to rescind policy EBCFA and follow the superintendent's recommendation to follow the DESE guidelines on masking.

Voting Yes: Michael Tropeano, David Boyle, Susie Scholl, Lance Kennedy and Susan Bollinger
Voting No: none
Abstaining: none
Absent: none

VOTE: On a motion made by Susie Scholl and seconded by Lance Kennedy, it was unanimously voted to conceptually approve the Test to Stay protocol as outlined by DESE.

Voting Yes: Michael Tropeano, David Boyle, Susie Scholl, Lance Kennedy and Susan Bollinger
Voting No: none
Abstaining: none
Absent: none

VOTE: On a motion made by Susan Bollinger and seconded by Lance Kennedy, it was unanimously voted to approve the school committee meeting minutes of June 29 and July 13, 2021.

Voting Yes: Michael Tropeano, David Boyle, Susie Scholl, Lance Kennedy and Susan Bollinger
Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: none

VOTE: On a motion made by David Boyle and seconded by Susie Scholl, it was unanimously voted to approve the PCMS surplus materials as presented.

Voting Yes: Michael Tropeano, David Boyle, Susie Scholl, Lance Kennedy and Susan Bollinger

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: none

VOTE: On a motion made by Lance Kennedy and seconded by Susan Bollinger, it was unanimously voted to approve the elementary, PCMS and PHS Student Handbooks for 2021-2022 school year with amendments as presented waiving policy BGB.

Voting Yes: Michael Tropeano, David Boyle, Susie Scholl, Lance Kennedy and Susan Bollinger

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: none

VOTE: On a motion made by Susan Bollinger and seconded by Susie Scholl, it was unanimously voted to approve the ESSER III Stakeholder Survey as a first read as presented.

Voting Yes: Michael Tropeano, David Boyle, Susie Scholl, Lance Kennedy and Susan Bollinger

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: none

VOTE: On a motion made by Susie Scholl and seconded by David Boyle, it was unanimously voted to approve the FY22 Administrator Salary Grid as presented.

Voting Yes: Michael Tropeano, David Boyle, Susie Scholl, Lance Kennedy and Susan Bollinger

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: none

VOTE: On a motion made by David Boyle and seconded by Susan Bollinger, it was unanimously voted to submit two articles to Town meeting with regard to establishing and funding with \$150k a special education stabilization fund with \$150k coming out of free cash based upon the School Committee return of funds.

Voting Yes: Michael Tropeano, David Boyle, Susie Scholl, Lance Kennedy and Susan Bollinger

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: none

VOTE: On a motion made by David Boyle and seconded by Lance Kennedy, it was unanimously voted to approve the submission of the CPC articles.

Voting Yes: Michael Tropeano, David Boyle, Susie Scholl, Lance Kennedy and Susan Bollinger

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: none

VOTE: On a motion made by Susie Scholl and seconded by Susan Bollinger, it was unanimously voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit another Town meeting article for two HVAC units which will be funded by free cash that was returned by the school at the FY21 closeout.

Voting Yes: Michael Tropeano, David Boyle, Susie Scholl, Lance Kennedy and Susan Bollinger
Voting No: none
Abstaining: none
Absent: none

VOTE: At 9:51PM, on a motion made by David Boyle and seconded by Lance Kennedy, it was unanimously voted, to adjourn.

Voting Yes: Michael Tropeano, David Boyle, Susie Scholl, Lance Kennedy and Susan Bollinger
Voting No: none
Abstaining: none
Absent: none