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PEMBROKE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, August 31, 2021
North Pembroke Elementary School Library

7:00 PM

Call to Order

Mr. Tropeano called the meeting to order at 7:02 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

Hanover letter regarding local control over masking.

Communications

Request to become a special municipal employee

Approval of Bill Schedule

Warrants were sent out electronically for approval.

Mr. Tropeano recapped the August 17th school committee meeting. PPS voted to abide by the DESE guidelines which made masks optional for all students. Three days later the DESE Commissioner Jeffrey Reilly made masks mandatory in all schools until October 1st. At that point school districts can apply for a waiver if they reached 80% percent vaccination rates. If PPS does not abide by the DESE mandate the State can take legal action against the district and/or they could withhold funding, which is about 51% of the budget.

Mrs. Cullity said there are 13 new cases reported today and is inclusive of the weekend. Four cases are under age 18 and all are symptomatic. 20% are vaccinated. Last week there were 39 cases, and this is not a good trend. Hospitalizations are low but nonexistent. On the State call today, the importance of masking and getting vaccinated was reiterated. She said about.

Discussion on DESE Recommendations for Return to Learn

Mrs. Obey said as of 8/12, 75% of PPS students 16-19 years old and 49% of 12-15 year old students are vaccinated, and this is still short of the 80% required by DESE for October 1st. DESE masking mandate is all students and staff K-12 regardless of vaccination status where a mask while indoors at school. Student athletes participating in indoor activities must be masked. Masks are not required while eating or drinking or while outdoors. PPS will extend masking to PreK students where appropriate. There is a federal mask mandate for busses and health offices at all times.

Mrs. Obey said the protocols and best practices from last year will continue even though there are no requirements set forth from DESE as far as student spacing, hand washing, sanitation and disinfection, HVAC. The only thing that they've asked is that districts consider continuing to be lenient on the attendance policy. The district will continue to maintain three feet or greater in all indoor settings, handwashing protocols will be enforced, enhanced sanitation and disinfection protocols will remain in place, continuation of air quality monitoring and HVAC

functioning, leniency on attendance policy, outdoor spaces will be used whenever possible and continuation of the COVID-19 Dashboard. There are five active student cases not due to school-based transmission or exposure. One case at PHS, two at Hobomock and two at Bryantville.

Close contacts that are exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols:

- Asymptomatic fully vaccinated close contacts but must monitor for symptoms for at least 14 days.
- Individual who is exposed to a COVID-19 positive person while both were masked and three feet apart
- Individuals on buses masked with windows open
- Individual who was diagnosed with COVID-19 within 90 days of exposure to a COVID-19 positive person and they are recovered and remain without COVID-19 symptoms.

Asymptomatic unvaccinated close contacts due need to quarantine or test. If not testing, they must quarantine for 10 days and can return on day 11 if still asymptomatic. If testing, they must test on day 5 or later and can return on day 8 if negative and asymptomatic. Symptomatic vaccinated and unvaccinated close contacts need to test and/or quarantine. Anyone exhibiting symptoms associated with COVID-19 must provide a negative test before returning to school.

Overview of Test to Stay Protocol

Mrs. Obey explained that unvaccinated individuals identified as close contact may consent to participate in Test to Stay Protocol. They will be tested each morning for five school days following the known exposure, using the BinaxNow rapid antigen test, by school health personnel. Once the results are received, they can join their class. Close contacts are advised to quarantine over the weekend. Unvaccinated individuals that do not wish to consent would follow the regular quarantine and testing guidelines. Per CDC/DPH, vaccinated individuals do not need to test or quarantine. Identified close contacts vaccinated and unvaccinated must be masked at all times unless eating or drinking. When eating or drinking they must be at least three feet from others.

Mrs. Obey said school superintendents were provided a legal opinion through the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents. The legal option is from Long and DiPietro, LLP and it is that DESE has the right to put a mask mandate on a school system. The school attorney, Joe Emerson, provided his opinion around the validity of the mandate from DESE and his opinion is in line with Long and DiPietro.

She said the South Shore superintendents are on the same page and want to make decisions based on local metrics. There is a letter signed by all the South Shore superintendents asking for control to be given back to the school district. Mr. Kennedy confirmed that the BOH supersedes school committee decisions. Mrs. Scholl asked if any other districts got a different legal opinion and Mrs. Obey said no. Mrs. Scholl asked about remote learning as an option and Mrs. Obey said DESE said it is not an option as of now. Mrs. Obey confirmed that the PPS can pivot to remote if allowed and needed.

Mr. Tropeano read the Hanover School Committee letter with changes specific to Pembroke Public Schools (attached).

Mrs. Jacee said she is against the mask mandate and asked the school committee to do everything possible to appeal to the State.

Mrs. McGee said she feels it is important for parents to choose whether a child wears a mask. She confirmed the Test to Stay program must be consented to. She is concerned about optional masking down the road causing segregation. Mr. Tiro said he feels there is more that can be done. Asked about masking violation infractions and Mrs. Obey said it would fall under non-compliance and progressive discipline in the student handbook. Asked about ramifications from DESE if PPS doesn't follow mandate and Mrs. Obey said they will withhold funding. Asked if a waiver is possible for students that parents can sign removing district from any COVID related issues.

Mr. Bibaud expressed concerns over his child wearing a mask.

Mr. Hamilton ask about mask breaks Mrs. Obey said last year there were a minimum of two breaks for 10 minutes each aside from lunch and outside time and said there are no requirement for mask breaks in this mandate.

Mrs. Barone asked if superintendents could get together and go after DESE and Mrs. Obey said superintendents have sent a letter to DESE.

Mr. Hurst asked about school work for close contacts that quarantine and Mrs. Obey said there will be daily check ins and students will have ample time to make up the work.

Mr. Kernan asked the committee to not comply with the masking mandate.

Mrs. Daniels asked how the district is paying for the Test to Stay program and Mrs. Obey said it is free from the State. She asked why testing and quarantine for vaccinated is different from unvaccinated. Mrs. Obey said it is the CDC

requirements and the district can't have a protocol that is less strict than the CDC and the Test to Stay Protocol is an opportunity for students to not miss instructional time.

Mr. Sesnoise said the masks don't work.

VOTE: on a motion made by Lance Kennedy and seconded by Susie Scholl, it was unanimously voted to authorize the Superintendent to draft a letter to Commissioner Riley and Governor Baker on the School Committee behalf and copy Senator Moran and Representative Cutler.

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

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: none

Consideration for Approval: School Committee Meeting Minutes of August 17, 2021

Tabled

Consideration for approval: Updated Policy EBCFA: Face Coverings

Mrs. Obey said this policy is not needed as the committee voted on 8/17 to adhere to the guidance and requirements set forth by DESE and DPH.

Tech Scorecard – Summer 2021

Mrs. Obey said this is the quarterly tech report at a glance. It outlines you know what the district has been able to accomplish over the past school year and some of the work that's happened this summer. The projector project has started and will continue over the first few weeks of school and all projectors that are on carts are now wall mounted eliminating the tripping hazard in all of our elementary and middle school classrooms. In addition, all the wireless access points in the district have been upgraded over the past 12 to 14 months.

Consideration for Second Read & Approval: ESSER III Stakeholder Survey

Mrs. Obey said the district must solicit stakeholder feedback on what the money is used for. It is a four question survey that will go out to the community which includes parents, students and community members at large around what issues the additional funds should be put towards.

VOTE: On a motion made by David Boyle and seconded by Susie Scholl, it was unanimously voted to approve for a second read and approval the ESSER III Stakeholder survey.

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

9/14

VOTE: At 9:31PM, on a motion made by Susie Scholl and seconded by Susan Bollinger, it was unanimously voted, by roll call vote, to enter Executive Session Pursuant to Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(3) to discuss strategy for collective bargaining and personal service contracts as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the legal position of the School Committee, as declared by the Chair.

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 Lance Kennedy and seconded by Susie Scholl, it was unanimously voted to authorize the Superintendent to draft a letter to Commissioner Riley and Governor Baker on the School Committee behalf and copy Senator Moran and Representative Cutler.

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 for a second read and approval of ESSER III Stakeholder survey.

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

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: none

VOTE: At 9:31PM, on a motion made by Susie Scholl and seconded by Susan Bollinger, it was unanimously voted, by roll call vote, to enter Executive Session Pursuant to Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(3) to discuss strategy for collective bargaining and personal service contracts as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the legal position of the School Committee, as declared by the Chair.

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

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: none