

**HOLLIS SCHOOL BOARD  
AUGUST 11, 2021  
MEETING MINUTES**

A regular meeting of the Hollis School Board was conducted on Wednesday, August 11, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. at the Hollis Upper Elementary School.

Tammy Fareed, Chairman, presided:

Members of the Board Present:           Amy Kellner, Vice Chairman  
  Robert Mann  
  Carryl Roy

Members of the Board Absent:           Brooke Arthur, Secretary

Also Participating:                        Andrew Corey, Superintendent  
  Donna Smith, Assistant Business Administrator

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**AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS**

Vice Chairman Kellner requested the discussion on the opening of school plan be moved ahead of public input.

Chairman Fareed noted the Board would be voting on the plan, which will impact parental decisions with respect to how they handle their student’s enrollment in the district and preparation for the school year. She supported amending the agenda to allow for public input following the presentation of the plan believing the presentation itself may address some of the questions and other questions raised by residents may assist the Board in its deliberation.

Members Roy and Mann supported the requested amendment. Member Mann implored those in attendance to remain for the Board’s deliberation.

*There being no objection, the agenda was amended as requested.*

**CORRESPONDENCE/RESIGNATIONS/NOMINATIONS**

The Principals Report included information on new hires. Superintendent Corey welcomed to the district Dr. Abby Diaz, Curriculum Coordinator. An additional/updated flow chart will be provided the Board at the start of the school year.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

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*The following amendments were offered:*

- Page 1, Line 46; replace “presented” with “presentation”
- Page 7, Line 48; delete the semi-colon following “Annual”
- Page 11, Line 10; delete “What” at the start of the sentence
- Page 12, Line 15; correct the spelling of “father”
- Page 16, Line 9; replace “American” with “America”
- Page 20, Line 14; replace “each” with “teach”

Page 20, Line 31; delete “No” before “The meeting”

Page 21, Line 10; delete “appear to”

Page 22, Line 37; delete “on”

**MOTION BY MEMBER KELLNER TO ACCEPT, AS AMENDED**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANN**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**4-0-0**

## **DISCUSSION**

- Opening of School Plan

Included as part of the [agenda](#) packet was a document titled Roadmap to a Safe Return to School 2021-2022. The primary goal is for in-person learning. Last year, the SAU had the flexibility to adjust and pivot, when necessary, which resulted in a very solid school year. This roadmap was developed under the same format; it is a framework that allows the administrative officers the ability to pivot and adjust as circumstances dictate. Through the summer the district has been mask optional. That approach went very well although a much smaller population on campus and large volume of space to accommodate the programs. There was one case that occurred at the tail end of the program.

Over recent weeks, the SAU has been attending seminars conducted by the New Hampshire Department of Health & Human Services (NH DHHS), the Superintendent has met with Superintendent colleagues and other professionals from the community and has met with a number of local medical doctors who have allegiance to Hollis and Brookline (have students in our school system). It is believed a solid roadmap has been constructed. Resources utilized were the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Center for Disease Control, Environmental Protection Agency, Learning Policy Institute, National Association of School Nurses, National Council on School Facilities, New Hampshire Grades K-12 Guidance, New Hampshire School Nurses Association, and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Superintendent Corey remarked the document before the Board is what he would call the abridged version. There is a much more detailed document that will be posted online as the start of the school year approaches. The Administration had looked to postpone this meeting to allow for the receipt of additional data and be able to have all the facts before coming forward but given the number of meetings that had to be scheduled, it simply did not work out.

Highlighting the various aspects of the document, Superintendent Corey stated although daily symptom monitoring via PowerSchool will no longer be required, students and staff, parents are asked to keep their symptomatic children home from school. This is probably the single biggest thing we can do as families if having a child who is sick (until able to be evaluated).

Targeted temperature checks will be taken by the school nurse, or designee, for any student who accesses the health office. All students who return from an absence must receive clearance to return to school from either a medical provider or the school nurse. Students should not ride the bus on the morning of their return and should report to the nurse's office immediately upon arrival.

Superintendent Corey spoke of having participated in the NH DHHS call earlier in the day. At this time, it is his recommendation to require masks for PreK-6 for the opening of school this year. That recommendation is based on discussions with Dr. Benjamin Chan, State Epidemiologist, and discussions with colleagues who are moving in that direction in other districts as well as the fact that a number of colleges are now requiring masks on campus. Not knowing where this is going, it is the safest way to open our schools for the year.

He spoke of being hopeful, when approving the plan, the Board provide him the authority to adjust as we go through the school year. Parents would be notified of any changes in as timely a manner as possible.

Each school will return to pre-COVID dismissal times. Elementary students will return to traveling to their specialist classrooms. Students will eat lunch in the cafeteria or outdoors. That is an issue that remains under discussion and may be an area where we pivot before the year begins. Hand sanitizer will be available for student and staff use. Students, teachers, and staff who have symptoms of infectious disease, such as COVID-19, should stay home and work with their doctor for testing and care. Students, teachers, and staff who have been identified as a close contact for a COVID positive individual will be notified but not required to quarantine. The NH DHHS just updated quarantining today. The Administration will review the document posted to see how it will impact the district. Fire and safety drills will resume.

Teachers will be provided with feedback from prior year teachers related to apparent skill gaps or weaknesses. They will work with their grade level teams to develop plans to spiral the content through the curriculum to reinforce the weaknesses. Quarterly collaboration time will be provided on Friday afternoons to ensure appropriate implementation of spiraled curricular content across the grade levels. Those Fridays have not yet been selected. It is likely there will be a Friday late in the 1<sup>st</sup> semester and a few in the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester. Ample notice will be provided to families.

Teachers will continue to use a variety of both formal and informal assessment tools to determine each student's present level of performance. All students will have assigned seats in their classroom (allowing for 3' of separation when feasible). Small group instruction may continue to utilize plexiglass for an additional prevention strategy. Students will be able to share some instructional materials and instructional spaces (i.e. library media center, elementary art room). School teams will continue to implement and utilize the MTSS-b intervention process. Google classroom and other online tools will be utilized according to the district established protocols.

All students will have classroom access to a district assigned Chromebook/laptop if they do not have their own. Were the district forced to go to 100% remote because the situation changes, there is the ability for every student to have a device.

School volunteers will be allowed and required to sign in and complete the paper health screening. All school staff will receive continued professional development training in evidence-based public health practices. Teachers will have access to the district developed online professional development training in the use of digital learning tools. The district will establish updated cleaning protocols based on guidance from public health agencies. Out-of-state professional development for teachers will be allowed on a case-by-case basis. One full-time dedicated substitute will be employed at the district level.

Health offices will return to their 2019-2020 school year space but will include one location for routine visits and a separate area for potentially symptomatic students. Students will have access to a locker or cubby for their personal items. Excess furniture will be returned to the classrooms.

The 2020-2021 recommendations of the independent HVAC consultants will continue to be implemented according to the recommended timeline and availability of resources. Electrostatic sprayers and misters will continue to be utilized daily by the custodial crew as part of the updated district established cleaning protocols. The district will take advantage of outdoor classrooms and spaces as much as possible.

Students at all schools will be provided time for socialization during the school day. This will include recess time and morning meeting times at the elementary schools. Each school will implement a developmentally appropriate action plan for addressing the social/emotional needs of their students. IEP, 504, and parent requested student progress meetings will continue to have the option to be held remotely. Staff will receive training in the research based program Mental Health First Aid. School counselors will provide additional support to students especially those returning to in-person after a long-term remote learning experience.

Students will be able to travel through the food service line based on 2019-2020 standard protocols. This issue remains in discussion. To bring lunches to classrooms as we did last year may not be feasible due to a labor shortage. However, that might be rectified by the volunteers. Food service will utilize both a cashless and cash purchase model. Students will have full access to eat lunch in the cafeteria or outdoors as determined by the building administration. Shared food items such as items donated by parents for classroom celebrations will be prohibited. Concessions at sporting events will resume where applicable.

Guidelines regarding student participation in athletics will be developed in accordance with the New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletic Association (NHIAA). Masks will be optional for student athletes. Student athletes will be asked to bring their own water bottle. Touchless water bottle filling stations will be available. Daily attendance will be recorded and maintained by coaches for both practices and games. Attendance by the public at all athletic events will be allowed. Visiting teams will have access to the locker rooms. Meetings and rehearsals for clubs and activities will be offered in-person or remotely. When in-person meetings take place, attendance will be maintained. Facility use by outside organizations will be limited to community-based groups and will require approval by the Superintendent's office. Overnight school sponsored student group travel, including athletics and field trips, will be approved on a case-by-case basis by the Superintendent.

Physical distancing is difficult to maintain on a school bus. As a result, families will need to determine their own level of risk tolerance for exposure. Masks are mandated on transportation, which is governed by the Federal Government. Some bus windows will remain open to promote the circulation of fresh air. Buses will be sanitized daily after the afternoon run, utilizing enhanced cleaning procedures.

Superintendent Corey reiterated the document provided is the short form. The larger document will be posted to the SAU website once the remaining details are understood. He spoke of having received a substantial number of emails some of which were addressed to him alone and others to the Board as well. He thanked those who wrote for providing input.

## **PUBLIC INPUT**

Gary Dunetz, 57 Long Hill Road

Has been a resident for 20 years and a Physician in Nashua for 37. He is encouraged to hear there is progress moving to a safer environment for children. He asked and was told teachers will be wearing masks. Social distancing is essential. He spoke of HVAC systems lacking in the State, noting HEPA filters in the classrooms would be beneficial. He believes it essential that students have the ability to have lunch at their desks and not in a group.

You have to keep your guard up. This is a very bad virus and 14% of cases now are children. Some of these children have long disability resulting from COVID.

Tiffany Testa, 101 Mooar Hill Road

Remarked she is not wearing a mask and can stand before the Board traumatized saying she does not want to wear a mask. She is an educator and dealt with the trauma of the last year. She teachers at an upper level but wanted to state she believes in the Board's ability to make the right safety medical decisions about our students. She knows the Superintendent did the work he needed to do in getting the right medical advice.

She asked the Board and community to insist on addressing the social and emotional needs of the students in a very post-traumatic year and a really traumatic beginning. We have students that are trying to figure this out. You need to please implement our educators with the correct tools to create environments of learning that are informed on what is going on; social and emotional learning, trauma informed. The issues go beyond mask wearing. This is a crazy time of social injustice. Just tool our teaches because it will serve our students.

She spoke of having total faith in the Board and Administration who kept the school going all year long. The decision about masks has already been made. Please change the focus and arm our teaches with the skills they need so they can address the needs of the students.

Chairman Fareed clarified that the decision regarding masks had not yet been made. It was a recommendation by the staff. After receiving public input, the Board would deliberate on the issue.

Dennis Johnson, 7 Main Street

Has 6 children going through the Hollis School District. He has lived in Hollis for 25<sup>+</sup> years. He suggested leaving it to the parents to determine what is right for their children. He believes it to be child abuse to ask a child to wear a mask, breathing in carbon dioxide all day long in this heat. He spoke of the psychological impact and of his step-son who has been out of school for 18 months as he was unable to wear a mask due to his autism.

Chairman Fareed expressed the desire to ensure Mr. Johnson is in touch with the Administration to discuss the concerns he has that are unique to his child.

Eric Morin, 18 Jambard Road

Masks should be a parental choice. Cloth masks do little to nothing to stop COVID-19. He is aware of the risks and willing to assume those risks for his children. Studies have shown that children rarely suffer serious illness or death and rarely spread the illness. Children generally contract it from adults. Faculty and staff that chose to be vaccinated have been vaccinated. COVID-19 will be here forever like the flu virus and common cold. There will always be new strains. There will always be risks and dangers we must face in life and the chance of serious illness in children from this virus is low. We will have to learn to deal with this virus and move on with our lives. He has witnessed his and many other children suffer needlessly.

His oldest son contracted painful skin infections due to mask use, which required antibiotics. His other son suffers seasonal allergies, and even with his allergy medication is still heavily congested and struggled breathing with a mask. He had to stay home from school for a few days and worry if he was going to have to go be tested for COVID again. There is no need to do this to our children. It is hurting them physically, emotionally, and developmentally. He requested masks be kept optional.

He started a petition to keep masks optional. It gained over 257 signatures in less than 48 hours. It was removed from Change.com for violating community standards. He reached out and asked the company what violation occurred and never received a response. He started another on a different site, and it was removed within a few hours with zero communication as to why it was deleted. The only site he was able to post a petition on without being purged was on Conservative Petition.org. Facebook immediately flagged it and would not allow it to be shared claiming it violated community standards. The new petition has over 100 signatures (copy provided). Both AboutHollis.com and ReopenNH.com now have petitions up to keep masks optional in Hollis and Brookline.

Adam Bragg, 98 Wright Road

Was speaking on behalf of 127 Hollis parents and community members who signed a petition (copy provided) asking for a very specific reasoned and data driven request to require masks in the elementary school until a vaccine is available to protect our students and prevent any outbreak of COVID-19 at the Hollis Primary School or at the Hollis Upper Elementary School.

He spoke of wanting to keep the children in the classroom where they receive the most comprehensive education. Having the entire population wear masks while indoors is the best chance of achieving this goal. We should be conservative with decisions related to the health of the student body. Death or serious illness of a child as a result of COVID-19 exposure is a far more serious injury than any discomfort that may be experienced due to universal masking.

Sensory issues are often cited as an argument against mask requirements. As a parent of a child with a sensory issue, he would never want the entire population of the school to be put at risk just because of his child's needs. Sensory disorders can and have been addressed through an IEP or 504 plan. He requested the Board follow the advice of the medical and public experts and extend the mask policy, which worked so well last year.

Karen Dodge, 73 Alson Drive

Asked, if through his various discussions, the Superintendent received input from parent organizations, and was told they would not have been on the calls, but he has received close to 100 emails from residents of the community on the mask issue.

Ms. Dodge stated we're being coerced into believing that a paper mask or decorative piece of cloth is sufficient to keep us from becoming ill from a virus that is spread through aerosol particles that circulate all year long waiting for an immune system to weaken. What is happening with the masks is it is distorting and twisting our immune systems so that the masks are counter-productive. We are told that children are resilient and mask wearing has no negative consequences. That mask is doing exactly what it is supposed to do; keep our children fearful, constantly remind them of a virus that they are being told is deadly, and to stay away from their friends and classmates.

While she hears those who say look at the science, there are as many doctors that are now not being censored and allowed to speak out and give us the actual truth about this virus. Anyone who thinks that having a child wear a mask in school is beneficial has not been in the classroom. Masks are removed frequently, dropped on the floor/ground, used to wipe noses, etc. Not to mention they are inhaling bacteria and their own carbon dioxide for 6 hours.

Research was done in Florida showing that these masks are contaminated within the first hours with things such as tuberculosis, influenza, fungus, and bacteria, and we're suggesting that this mask is desirable.

She stated the desire for there to be someone who looks at the science from the perspective that the vaccine is not approved; experimental bioagent. The only reason it is allowed to be administered is because the FDA was lied to when they said there was no therapeutics for it. The decision to adhere to mandatory mask wearing or vaccinations cannot be supported in the actual research literature.

Ritu Ullal, 25 Cummings Lane

Moved here in 2011 with her children. She is a family physician and has been delivering care in Southern New Hampshire for the past 10 years. She volunteers and is very invested in the community and children and cares a great deal about the people in the room and the importance of listening to all of the different opinions and perspectives.

Her role as a provider is to encourage the use of strategies that can keep us both safe and functioning in this pandemic. Her role as a community member is to share what she knows and answer questions that will help people and organizations make decisions based on as much valid information as possible.

We are currently on the verge of another surge of the Delta virus. During that last week of July 29<sup>th</sup> to August 5<sup>th</sup>, 94,000 American kids did get COVID, and some of them were admitted to ICUs. Thankfully deaths are rare, but they do happen. Thankfully many did very well, however, we are now seeing a long COVID, and there are psychological impacts as well as long physical health detriments that occur with long COVID.

All major expert groups are recommending universal masking for all students, teachers, staff, and volunteers K-12, given the Delta variant is much more transmissible than the original. We know that at minimum we should do the precautions that work well. Masking one child but not the other is not as effective as masking both. We also know that if both children are masked and there is an exposure, that other child is actually, per current recommendations, not required to quarantine per the data that we have, which will actually keep kids in school longer.

We do know that exposures will happen because the surge is traveling from west to east, and we're next on the list (few weeks away). She urged people to think about other rules that we have in place for the health of ourselves and the community; seatbelts are uncomfortable but keep you safe. We protect others from second-hand smoke when we have laws that ask folks to do it outdoors. Masking is much the same.

One thing that has come up a few times and has been said to her is that even though the CDC and American Academy of Pediatrics have made their recommendations, New Hampshire is saying you can pivot and do what you need to do as school systems; she is uncertain what additional data the State has that allows us to deviate from organizations that have spent, time, money, profession into this.

Danielle Dunetz, 23 Cummings Lane

Pediatrician in Nashua and has two children that attend HPS. She is concerned with the health of our children in the community. We have allowed for the children to all go back to school like normal, however, if we start removing COVID precautions such as universal masking too soon, we will likely have COVID transmissions in the schools and be back to full remote learning.

The Delta variant, which is now predominant in the U.S. is not last year's strain. Last year someone with COVID would infect 2 people on average. With the Delta variant one person infects 8 other people. Instead of it taking up to 15 minutes to infect someone, this variant can infect someone in as little as 5 seconds. Community transmission in Hillsborough County as of last week is considered substantial. The CDC recommends everyone, including individuals fully vaccinated, wear masks in indoor public settings and all areas with substantial and high transmission of COVID-19.

As physicians, they are seeing that children are getting sick from COVID especially the Delta variant. Since the spring of 2020, the mortality rate of COVID in children is twice that of the worst flu season in the last 10 years. Children shouldn't be dying in 2021 of preventable infectious diseases period. Thousands have suffered from Multi-system Inflammatory Syndrome in Children or MISC a potentially fatal complication of COVID. Up to 1/3 of children with COVID whether mild, moderate, or severe symptoms, are developing long-haul COVID systems such as chronic fatigue, brain fog, smell and taste disturbance, and heart inflammation. We don't know what this means for their long-term health.

The U.S. has made progress with a highly effective vaccine, however only 40% of children 12 and up have been vaccinated and half the school population, ages 5-11, have not had the opportunity to be vaccinated.

This year the State has given the school systems minimal input on reopening, however, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the CDC are calling for universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors for K-12 schools regardless of the vaccination status and the continuation of COVID-19 precautions.

Please listen to the experts if you want uninterrupted in-person learning. COVID-19 precautions in school should be what was recommended last year at a minimum. Schools have multiple rules whether or not someone can wear a hat, chew gum, etc. Asking everyone to wear a mask in a pandemic demonstrates responsibility.

Agatha Connelly, 14 Sawmill Road

Parent of a 6<sup>th</sup> grade student who is excited about the school year. On behalf of her child, she thanked the Administrators, Board, teachers, staff for implementing a successful, common sense, fair minded solution to the challenging situation in the last school year. Her child was fully in school, a feat only achievable by a limited number of districts nationwide. On behalf of her daughter, and at her request, she pleaded please use the same open minded common sense approach this school year.

She requested that each family be allowed the decision to mask or not mask their child. Her child has enjoyed a fully normal life ever since the government issued orders regarding masks went down. They have gone to amusement parks and dined indoors several times a week with elderly relatives with no masks and no illness. Her daughter has 4 wishes for the school year; to re-open the cafeteria at lunch time, to allow friends to sit together at lunch, to allow talking not silence during lunch, and to not make face coverings mandatory. Many of them fall on the floor becoming pieces of trash and are put back on the children's faces. Please use the commonsense guidelines for this school year.

Donald Reape, 49 Powers Road

Is a physician. What we all need to realize is that the CDC and American Academy of Pediatrics are making the recommendations and he is hopeful we follow them. The Delta variant of this virus is much different than what we were dealing with last year. We are facing another surge in COVID-19 and want to make certain we understand it is not the same as it was last year.

Mark Kingsley, 339 Wheeler Road

Has been in the community for about 14 years, graduated two children from the school. He stated his appreciation for the thoughtful approach the Board has taken. He requested as much robustness be put into the methodology that will be used to deal with the socialization issues for masked children as has been the case with regard to safety and healthcare.

David Dussault, 2 Arbor Lane

Everything that we do in life involves a risk versus benefit analysis. The context in which you establish policy should be within the context of who you are dealing with. If dealing with an old-age home what you do in terms of protecting people and the outcome if you don't is one thing. It is different when you are talking about young children. It has been well established that generally speaking even if children do get it, they muscle through it. In terms of the risk versus the benefit he thinks the biggest risk for our kids is the emotional and social stress of being distanced from their classmates and being taught to distrust one another and stay away from other people. This is a country that gets together. We accomplish things because we work as teams.

If our kids are taught to be afraid of one another because we have to mask, that detriment far outweighs the risk of them possibly getting COVID. In general, he has no problem with families and parents putting masks on their kids if they so choose, but it should definitely be a choice. He personally happens to have mild asthmatic conditions and when forced to wear a mask he got sick because he was taking care of his community. We have to keep people healthy mentally as well as physically.

Jim Gill, 30 Milton Place

Cannot help but notice that the jury is hung; 3 wearing masks and 3 not. That tells him 3 members of the Board are very concerned about COVID being spread through aerosols, etc. The only thing he would say to the 3 Board members wearing masks is like Abe Lincoln said, to be a public servant is to gather up what your constituents' will is. AboutHollis has 250 (before being terminated 2 days after starting) opposed to mandatory mask wearing. Your job is to reflect the will of your constituents. You personally, as all of us are, are free to wear masks individually and to mask your children, but he wished to make the distinction that their intense feelings about masks do not substitute for reflecting the will of the constituents that elected them to serve.

These issues are mind numbing. He tries to be fair and balanced and look at the pros of wearing masks and vaccination. As near as he can tell, were he a member of the Board he would follow Aristotle's advice; you will find the mean located between two extremes, deficiency and excess. You have to vote one way or the other. It would be deficient to do nothing. It would be excessive to mandate masks when the best he can find in studies is they realize with these cloth masks small enough microns or aerosols can get through them. The only thing they will counter assert is that it slows the spread. You balance that off with the fact that we have to take an assertion not science. The middle of the road as far as he is concerned with regard to masks is you cannot go wrong morally than to leave this in your constituents hands as the parents who have to get up with the kids, fund their college, go to school, etc. As far as the vaccinations go being also excessive, mandating them.

Chairman Fareed clarified a school board cannot mandate a vaccine.

Katharine Kinanne, South Merrimack Road

In the reopening plan it says each school will implement a developmentally appropriate action plan for addressing the social emotional needs of their students. The experiences she has had is that has not been implemented and it has caused serious problems with students and parents she has been talking to.

A district cannot perform evaluations regarding social anxiety disorder or trauma. They can't test in-house for that. They have to go outside, which is a higher cost for the district. Social anxiety disorder and trauma are significant as a result of this pandemic and the school district needs to be able to test for these students in-house so that they can properly develop social emotional plans to help reduce the adverse effects of this.

Elizabeth Barbour, 5 Broad Street

Has had the opportunity to talk with the Superintendent a few times and was able to hash out the DEI information. With DEI and social emotional learning, it seems the schools focus a lot on this. This is an incoming topic. Her point is here we are spending a lot of time discussing and implementing these types of programs into all of our schools, and yet we're dealing with mandatory masking on kids, which could cause very serious emotional issues.

Our school board and administration are going to have to address that with these programs. Are we bolstering these programs to deal with the masking issue? You'd better be prepared for parents whose kids come home with more emotional issues, new emotional issues due to mask wearing, due to not being able to see your face, see their teacher's face and their friends faces. This is going to be an issue that will go on for years and years. We will be responsible for this. She requested they consider this. She believes parent organizations should have been sought after to gain input with regard to masking.

The times she has had the opportunity to talk with the Superintendent he has cleared up so many things for her. One in particular was understanding how the boards function. She thanked the Board members for the time they give. She spoke of being hopeful the Board would seriously deliberate on the topic of non-requirement of masking.

Marcia Donaldson, 38 Van Dyke Road

Seconded the gratitude to the Board for the work they do. A lot of times higher level people in any organization tend not to appreciate the intelligence of the masses. She thinks they would find everyone in attendance has done a lot of reading. She has done a great deal of research. Nothing thus far can sway her away from the fact that mask wearing should be optional.

Chairman Fareed commented someone pointed out they are observing the patterns they are seeing. She wished to make 100% clear Ms. Smith and Superintendent Corey are employees of the district. They are not School Board members, they are not elected, and they cannot vote on anything. They bring recommendations from the staff to the Board where Board votes are required by law or in some other fashion are best deemed to need a vote from the Board in order that the district be all on the same footing. The members of the School Board are elected for three-year terms (staggered). They are elected by the community, members of the community and taxpayers from Hollis. She thanked those who provided input.

## **PRINCIPALS' REPORT**

Superintendent Corey noted the report identifies upcoming events, new hires, summer work being completed at the buildings, and enrollment information.

Asked if new hires are anticipated for spikes in registrations, he noted the place where a spike has been seen is in kindergarten. Aware of that, there was a hire. There will be 5 kindergarten classes and the highest enrollment during his tenure (80-90 entering the district). Typically the growth occurs in the higher grades. In both Hollis and Brookline there seem to be a group of families where the oldest child is heading into kindergarten.

Asked if he believes the district is properly staffed for the September opening, he stated he does. The struggle will be in the specialty areas, e.g., speech, language. The district will utilize consultants that have been used in the past while continuing to advertise for the position(s).

Vice Chairman Kellner stated her perception there has been extremely high turnover this year and questioned whether it is an accurate observation or if there is concern. Superintendent Corey responded there has definitely been higher than normal turnover across the SAU. New staff orientation will be conducted next week, and we will welcome some 50 new employees across the SAU. A number of our employees, as was anticipated, were approaching that natural retirement cycle. With the pandemic and other issues, some have chosen to exercise the option perhaps a year or two sooner than they might have otherwise. We are starting to see some of that natural turnover. What typically happens is you get new employees into the district, they raise their own families, and spend long careers in the district. There is excitement in the belief we have outstanding people coming on board that are here for a career move and not just a steppingstone.

Asked if he has met the newly hired Student Resource Officer (SRO), Superintendent Corey spoke of having been involved in the interview process. In the September timeframe, the Board will be provided with a formal Memorandum of Understanding between the district and the Police Station. This will be the first full-time SRO in Hollis.

Asked if the district is on track to secure the School Psychologist, Guidance, Case Manager(s), Superintendent Corey stated the interviews for Guidance Counselor have completed and recommendations are anticipated. The Case Manager position is a difficult one to fill. One of the neighboring communities has openings for 16 case manager positions. Regarding the School Psychologist position, the likelihood is a move to utilizing a consultant until the position is able to be filled.

## **DISCUSSION (Continued)**

- **HSMART Building Project Update**

The new propane tanks are in at HPS. They have been piped into the building, and the new boiler is expected to be finished and inspected next week. The fire alarm sprinkler system is installed. All piping is in and the last of the sprinkler heads are being attached. The 15,000 gallon cistern is buried. The HPS has a new fire alarm system. At HUES, all work has been completed on the unit ventilators. The ventilation system is very good, but this summer each of the ventilation systems were addressed classroom-by-classroom and put into the master system so that they can now be controlled remotely. That will allow for the heat to be turned up at 2:00 a.m. should there be a freeze, or the temperature turned down when the outside temperature changes.

The next phase in HPS will be the cleaning phase. The crew at HUES has been staying up with theirs. If need be, they will assist with the HPS cleaning. Final inspections will be done in the next week to 10 days. There is a lot of excitement for the work that has been completed; will add useful life to an aging building. He commented Amherst priced out a new school; K-5 for 500 students came in at a cost of \$66 million. It is believed what the district has done over the past two years has been a very prudent investment in our buildings spending approximately \$5 million to take two buildings that are vintage and give them a new fresh appeal that will serve us for many decades.

Chairman Fareed remarked the sprinkler system is required by law to have a dedicated water supply under containment. There is a 15,000 gallon tank underground and the equipment that runs it is housed in a new shed.

Member Mann commented after many years of service on the Board, not having a sprinkler in the HPS was a constant irritant for him. He is thrilled we have finally gotten to a point to take on such a project.

Chairman Fareed noted the HPS building was constructed in 1952, has been and continues to be grandfathered out of requiring a sprinkler system. We have learned through our architect and the technical engineering consultants that was legal. The Fire Chief has been hounding the Superintendent since he first joined the SAU to get a sprinkler system in at HPS. It was an appropriate going away gift for the Chief as he retired.

### **DELIBERATIONS**

- To see what action the Board will take regarding the reopening plan as presented

**MOTION BY MEMBER KELLNER TO ACCEPT THE REOPENING PLAN AS PRESENTED NOTING THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT THAT MASKS BE REQUIRED AND THAT THE SUPERINTENDENT HAS THE AUTHORITY TO MAKE CHANGES TO THIS PLAN BASED ON LOCAL CONDITIONS AND WILL ADVISE THE BOARD OF ANY SUCH CHANGES**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANN**

### **ON THE QUESTION**

Member Roy remarked the daily symptom monitoring via PowerSchool, while a tedious task, provided valuable insight into what was going on. She questioned the reasoning behind not requiring that this year.

Superintendent Corey stated what was learned last year was the inability to always police that information. We started out very strong and found our nurses were able to answer the majority of the questions. What we found is our families were willing to pick up the phone and call to speak with the nurse. We were then able to have more informed discussions, e.g., if the nurse was aware the child had allergies, she was able to work with the parent. Often times the student would start the day with the nurse so that a determination could be made. It allowed us to become more personalized.

When looking at the benefit versus the parents' ability to get everyone organized to get to school, etc., in talking through it as an SAU, it was not believed the value was there. It is not something he sees the SAU would need to return to even if there were a spike. Parents became trained and knew the symptoms.

Member Roy remarked NH DHHS has recommended the school year start masked. They have not provided the next steps. She questioned if it is safe to assume once the quarantine rules are seen and absorbed, we will be able to define the metric where we can go from required masking to masks optional or vice versa.

Superintendent Corey noted in today's call with NH DHHS, they provided two examples of potential metrics to look at. One of the big discussions is the county. Often times what is occurring in the county is not a good indication of what is occurring in a local community. Nashua and Manchester are always pulled out of that because of their size and their own public health departments. He believes the SAU will craft the plan internally, working with other local Superintendents, compiling the data and establishing pivot points, e.g., at what point are masks optional, mandatory, how long after vaccines are available to all, etc. The quarantine aspect has been defined. He has not yet had time to read the update that came out today. It is different. One of the issues around masks is with the narrower focus on contact tracing.

Member Roy commented on the discussion around district-assigned Chromebooks remaining in the classroom as opposed to traveling back and forth from school to home. There is not a set plan to offer remote learning this year. She questioned if there is a plan in place for how to educate those students that do fall into a quarantine or isolation, exposure or illness situation. Superintendent Corey stated that would be difficult this year as remote learning only existed because of the Emergency Order. The Emergency Order allowed the district to go fully remote. Currently he could use 5 remote days to offset snow days, similar to the old concept of blizzard bags. He is of the belief, should the data trend in a negative direction, we would receive authority to look at that. What will happen is every classroom will have appropriate technology for the students. It would not be a difficult task to assign each of those devices out. In the discussion with the unions, were the district to go fully remote, they are not opposed to it. The room in Zoom piece is out because of what has occurred at the State level. As we move forward, we will follow the data closely, and if for some reason we had to move in a direction like that we could.

Member Roy noted members of the public have expressed concern over the issue of the cafeteria, and students not wearing masks in there if the direction is for masks to be required. Superintendent Corey remarked in terms of the social/emotional piece, when we went to cohorts (each class being separated from the others) that became difficult for the students. Being looked at are recess and the cafeteria as potential places to offer the co-mingling. In terms of looking at indoors, it is a much more controlled environment because we can utilize tables and space them out with the social distancing requirements, etc.

There are ongoing discussions about the cafeteria. HPS is a concern because of the size. One of the areas where we are struggling in terms of staffing is with cafeteria workers. The hourly wage is one where people can go to a number of alternative venues and out earn what they can earn being a cafeteria person. It is uncertain if every lunch could be delivered. That is also one of the reasons why we are welcoming back volunteers.

Chairman Fared commented the Facilities Committee meeting that occurred earlier in the day was held just outside the cafeteria at HPS, the head custodian shared with her what he was doing to measure out the lunch tables. They are actively physically measuring to see if we can arrange the tables, etc. so that the cafeteria can accommodate. Superintendent Corey remarked the other concern is the actual lunch line. It is believed that can be overcome by the distancing and if need be, lunch can be as it was last year, prepackaged.

Member Roy questioned if there is a plan to keep volunteers to a single job. Superintendent Corey stated the district will return to its traditional model where the principals will know who is coming in. There will be further enhancements of what we are already doing. One of the concerns that was noted for educational gaps is the reading fluency of children because we were not able to do as much out loud reading as we traditionally do.

Member Roy asked about the New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletic Association (NHIAA), which is an SAU designation (normally high school) and questioned if there is anything they will put into play that will affect extra-curricular athletics at the schools in the Hollis district. Superintendent Corey stated if the NHIAA put in a mask mandate for a sport, he would want to give it a strong look as far as our Recreation Department; reach out to them to make them aware. He spoke of the desire for programs such as Boys Scouts, Girl Scouts and other activities, given the concern with the social emotional aspect. We need to bring kids together, and it is believed that can be safely done in the school environment.

Member Roy spoke of the outside groups and cleaning requirements; is the plan to limit those groups to specific portions of the building? Superintendent Corey stated they would work with the head custodian of the building who has a regular cleaning protocol, e.g., it may be that the group meets in the room that is one of the last cleaned in the evening. As much as possible, with groups meeting on different nights, they would be kept to the same room so that custodians always know that is the extra room that has to be done.

Member Roy commented on the issue of buses noting last year siblings were grouped together regardless of their age and asked if that plan remains in place for the coming school year. Superintendent Corey stated it does. With more and more parents going back to work, it is not known how many can carpool. If we have the same number of people providing transportation for their children, the buses will not be crowded. From day to day we cannot guarantee how many people will get on that bus.

Member Roy remarked we reflected last year on how well received the outdoor education and additional outdoor time was. She hears every parent talking about the social/emotional aspect. The outdoor time is an opportunity to be mask free, and she would like to see that time maximized. Superintendent Corey remarked as we get to discussions of the budget, he would like to see more permanent pavilion type structures as we have learned how powerful that can be. It is still that balancing act because when we meet with Homeland Security, they are about locking everything down and being safe. What we learned through the pandemic is something we always knew but got away from because of the security aspect, is how much those interactions and informal discussions in even going from the classroom to the outside mean to children. We've got to figure out ways, even well beyond the pandemic, to incorporate that back into what we do.

Member Mann questioned if the mask recommendation was specific to this district. Superintendent Corey stated it was. For the first time, the Administration looked at this through the lens of each of the districts. He remarked we may be the exact same, but he will tell you he is still digesting today's presentation and what it means for students who are in grades 7-12. The balancing act for him is that many times when he has a student in grades 7-12, he also has a younger sibling in the elementary school. It is trying to balance those risks for the families. As much as he understands being a parent and having that choice, the dilemma for him is he has to make decisions for 2,300 students and he is trying to decide for the overall good. The biggest thing we have to do as much as possible is stay in person. We learned that last year. When he talks to his colleagues who were unable to stay in person for whatever reason, they have an uphill battle this fall. We're debating masks again and some school districts are trying to figure out how to open for the first time in 18 months.

He is excited to see students return, and understands he is not giving the answers that everyone wants. He is doing what he did last year; making the best decision for our SAU and our students to move forward.

Member Mann asked for clarification one of the main drivers for the recommendation was grade level. Superintendent Corey responded it is also the fact that these grades have not had an opportunity to be vaccinated. He spoke of the discussion with Dr. Chan and a piece of information he took away from that; he has young children and commented when he goes to the supermarket, he still wears a mask even as a fully vaccinated person because he is going home to his young children. Hearing that from an expert who is far more knowledgeable in this area than he, that those are steps he is taking until his child is able to be vaccinated. If everyone had the opportunity to be vaccinated in November it may be 60-90 days from there that we could be looking to move to a mask optional scenario.

Asked to what extent the plan is subject to agreement with the collective bargaining units, Superintendent Corey stated very little has been heard from the unions. He has reached out and they understand the position he is taking. He does not see any pushback. We are not intending to do a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the unions this year. Every staff member had the opportunity to be vaccinated. We provided the clinic here.

Member Mann stated concern with situations where students are physically unable to wear a mask and questioned to what extent there are exemptions built into the plan for those students. Superintendent Corey stated there are a couple of cases where the district is working with families who may not return to the building because of the situations at home, and we will work with them. Last year the families that returned, we were able to work with all students. Part of the goals we would have for all students who struggled would be building that into their daily lesson as part of their growth skill.

Last year when we discussed this there was concern the children wouldn't be able to wear the masks, and they did it very well. Granted they dropped the masks in the dirt, they did all the things; might have blown their nose in the mask, etc. We had plenty of other masks. Just like the child that cannot tie their shoe or has an accident not making it to the bathroom, we deal with all of those issues every day.

Member Mann spoke of sharing the enthusiasm for having students be outdoors as much as possible. He does not relish the idea of students having to be masked for hours on end. He questioned the opportunities that can be provided whether that be outdoor structures, etc. to provide opportunities for students to be outdoors. Superintendent Corey responded having heard the Board's support, he would bring back to the principals the desire to do as much as we can to get students out. If that means that we have to start by literally scheduling it so that it becomes a habit, we can. Teachers practice many things desired to become habits with the students, e.g., fire drills, etc. Having the Board meetings now and gaining the input will allow that information to be incorporated into the Administrative Retreat next week and to get the message across that we want students to be outdoors X number of times per day. The vast majority of teachers did that and really enjoyed it, and it will continue. We are very fortunate in Hollis and Brookline that we have a wealth of property that lends itself to that activity.

Member Mann questioned if it is anticipated expenditures will be needed for outdoor structures, etc. Superintendent Corey stated at both HPS and HUES they used tents. They were not as widely used as you would think, but outdoor spaces were. He believes it was due to having a nice balance of sun and shade. When looking at the pavilion structures, that would be more of a budget item. He sees those as being more permanent and offering a little more protection so that they may have an outdoor whiteboard, etc. One of the things we learned with outdoor activities is we could not do much in the way of technology. One of the pieces that would be looked at with the outdoor pavilions would be a wireless hub so that we could continue to do what we do in the classroom outdoors.

The Administration supports the recommendation. We will be okay using the outdoor space for the 3 months in the fall. It may be that the pop-up tents are used. Asked if the schools have those tents, Superintendent Corey stated the retained fund balance discussion could include those items as that is a reserve fund the Board could utilize to do things like that. We also realize that within the SAU as a whole we have quite a few of the pop up tents because we have such a wide berth of athletic programs at the high school. If we need those, we could access them, and if we find that we are getting the use out of them to justify a purchase, that would be done. We have an outstanding PTA, and he believes they would be more than willing to assist.

Member Mann remarked if last year is an example, the start of school was a source of anxiety. We are kind of there again. His expectation as a Board member is not that we do as good as last year, he wants to do better. He will have that expectation. He hates to see that we have to do the mask mandates and will be diligent at the upcoming meetings in looking to understand how we are doing, what the pivot point is. He questioned if the Superintendent has pivot points in his mind at this time. Superintendent Corey stated if the data went back to where it was at the end of June, he would probably come back and go to masks optional. We went masks optional all summer (smaller sample) and only had 1 case. About 10 days ago we had 1 case in Hollis and yesterday we had 15. That spike concerns him as that is a larger spike than in many of the weeks we saw last year. Brookline stayed at 1 until today and now they have jumped to 5. The Nashua, Amherst, Milford numbers are growing as well. We tend to share the same supermarkets and places like that. It is not like as a community we can come into Hollis and just close the doors. He does not necessarily see an issue that we didn't deal with last year, it is just right now we have opened up again.

Member Mann stated his remarks about doing better are not in any way a knock on the phenomenal execution last year but are more about just a challenge. We have gone through this for a year, are a little smarter than we were this time last year. He wants to put the challenge out to all of us to try to do the best we can.

Vice Chairman Kellner remarked we can all agree the remote learning that happened this past year was so much better than when we had to initially pivot in the spring. She feels part of that was because our teachers had a very clear understanding of our expectations of them during remote learning partly because of the MOA. She is concerned that if things move in a negative direction and we need a large group of students to pivot to remote, what that would look like. She does not want it to look like it did in the spring. Superintendent Corey remarked room in Zoom proved very difficult for everyone. The kids did the best they could as did the adults, and he was happy with what we offered, but it was a very difficult environment doing both at the same time. If we were forced to pivot, which would take a lot to do with what we know, it would be more of a pivot for a school or a district for a period of time to let cases settle and then come back to in-person. The dilemma is we won't have that safety net for those families who are comfortable in remote. As much as extended learning opportunities and some pieces online always existed, the law as written was never envisioned to be K-6 like we did with remote learning.

If we look at number of cases as our measure of doing better, he is uncertain how we would fair because he believes quarantine will be slightly different. That changing quarantine will potentially increase risk. He provided the example of two individuals both wearing masks, one coming down with the virus and the other not having to quarantine if observing social distancing, etc. The other individual could still contract the virus and potentially be someone who will transmit it. That is where he has the sleepless nights trying to figure that out; what is notification from NH DHHS going to be like this year. We're still trying to iron out how we will notify families. We had a system down last year, but quarantine and isolation will change our system a bit. What happens when the student has to isolate for 10 days, and we are not doing room in Zoom, and it is maybe just a handful of kids? Part of him says we have moved everything to Google Classroom so they will have access to all their material, but he is uncertain if that is the most ideal way. At the same time, it is the way we would have addressed it pre-pandemic, and it worked pretty well then. It is just as you learn that you can do things better it

is tough to take a step back to something that is potentially not as good. At the same time, you need to be in the mindset that if the child is sick the child is sick, and school should wait. That is where the guidance counselors will come in and put the brakes on and say schoolwork isn't that important right now.

Vice Chairman Kellner commented she was thinking more along the lines of if we have an entire grade eating lunch in the cafeteria together unmasked; if there were a case, she would imagine that would trigger a larger group to potentially isolate or quarantine, and then what are the options for those children.

Superintendent Corey responded if we had a large group, say the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, and it was going to be the majority of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, he would probably take the entire 5<sup>th</sup> grade and put them onto Zoom and keep everyone together educationally. It is understood that would create some difficulties for families. We may have to look at allowing those families who need a place for the student to reside who does not have COVID. They might come into a setting like this, and we might supervise it with one person. The students would be online with their individual teachers, but they are all in the same environment for supervision. Those are things we will have to address when and if the situation comes about. It will be like last year in that regard. Although he wishes he had all the answers, he doesn't even know the questions yet.

Vice Chairman Kellner spoke of the public comments provided around the social and emotional impact of this past year and a half. She requested the Superintendent speak to the specific actions being taken to address that. Superintendent Corey spoke of discussions taking place looking at it through two lenses; during the school day where we will work with teachers and staff doing ice breakers, more activities that really start to break down the groups so that they become a cohesive group and how much can we do between the different classes. At the start of the year he would like to keep the students in cohorts from the safety perspective, and if the data moves in a positive direction co-mingle them. We have begun and will continue discussions around running some after school programs utilizing the outdoors for activities that will bring students together, parents know it is supervised, there is a set pick up time, etc. We learned a lot of kids didn't have a lot of different physical alternatives. We need to get them back to the basketball courts, ultimate frisbee, non-competitive games where everyone can feel included.

Chairman Fareed commented unfortunately we don't have NH DHHS guidelines on the quarantine issue as it came after the meeting started. Part of the answers to some of the questions even around those outdoor and other social emotional activities would have to do with how the district will address a student being positive for COVID. We don't know what the guidelines are from the State in terms of whether that individual student or the entire cohort would be impacted.

The hallmark of last year's success was the flexibility. We could pivot based on the available data. She spoke of nights when senior staff were in classrooms with the custodians doing the cleaning because the Superintendent got a call about a positive case at 9 in the evening, and the classroom was cleaned to COVID specifications that night in order to have school open the next day for the entire classroom except for that student and any others who had to be quarantined based on the State guidelines. We cannot ask people to work themselves like that.

Last year one of the guidelines was exposure without a mask for 10-15 minutes and at that point a different quarantine recommendation was triggered. This year it may be less because the Delta variant is so transmissible, or it may be more. We don't know. Whatever we decide tonight might have to be modified if the State gives us specific guidelines we have to respond to.

Chairman Fareed spoke of being unhappy with the answer the universe has given, not the Superintendent, that the district does not have a MOU for that set of what if questions around remote learning. With the hypothetical example of an entire grade being impacted it only makes sense to put the entire cohort in remote learning. She questioned if the existing contract with the teachers would allow the district to pivot an entire section like that.

Superintendent Corey remarked the first question is whether the State would permit that. Last year it would have been his decision because of the emergency orders that were standing. Now he would have to reach out to the NH DHHS and obtain their input. In his discussions with staff over the summer, he does not believe that would be a problem. We have read about a number of circumstances in other areas of the State with teachers, but our teachers were one of the main reasons we could open. He does not foresee them being the roadblock they were in other districts.

Chairman Fareed spoke of the emergency orders and how that created a framework and foundation for the success we had last year with our plan. It is no longer in place, and we no longer have the architecture for some of the very successful decisions and planning elements we had last year. She spoke of concern with the cafeteria and lunch line.

She noted the language within the plan that states “Students, teachers, and staff who have been identified as a close contact for a COVID positive individual will be notified but not required to quarantine.” She questioned if that language could change based on the information received from the State. Superintendent Corey stated his belief that will not change. That is one of the areas that he was referring to when asked what the criteria will be around success for this year because they have really reduced the requirements around quarantines.

Chairman Fareed remarked she considers that a really serious hole in our safety planning. She understands the State is also shorthanded and is working as hard as they can, but it is deeply frustrating that 3 weeks before school starts, we don’t have guidance.

She noted the language that states “Teachers will be provided with feedback from prior year teachers related to apparent skill gaps or weaknesses. They will work with their grade level teams to develop plans to spiral the content through the curriculum to reinforce the weaknesses.” and asked for clarification of “spiral”. Superintendent Corey provided a math example; he might have introduced fractions in 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> grade, but only provided a basic introduction, everyone understood what a fraction is; numerator and denominator and maybe we turned them into percents and then they move into the 5<sup>th</sup> grade and now that percent, fraction, and decimal all becomes more of a major unit and then by 6<sup>th</sup> grade you are looking at mastery. It may be that we don’t even feel we did a great job of introducing fractions so we are telling the 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers in advance when you get to fractions, you cannot assume this is the starting point. It has been that starting point for 10 years, but we just don’t feel like we had that comfort level. Before leaving this year, our teachers did that for all their content, and under the leadership of the Assistant Superintendent, each grade passed on to the Professional Learning Community what we mastered, what we introduced, and those areas that we are concerned with and want to see people spend a little more time on.

We look at that spiral as something that doesn’t end just because you graduated the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, it goes on to the COOP. If again we are a little bit behind for that group going up, we are also talking with the COOP district and 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade as well.

Chairman Fareed questioned if a parent has a concern with a child having a shortfall, how would they go about addressing their concerns for their particular child moving forward? Superintendent Corey stated it already started this summer as the district offered some math and reading academies that families took advantage of. It will take place when we get to parent open house. We will have the first trimester grades. During this whole

process we have the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) process, which is Response to Intervention upgraded to a more relevant model. What that means is the members of a PLC team would bring forward concerns they may have around students in their class. That results in a group talking about the students instead of 1 teacher. Sometimes when I am the teacher, I have my repertoire of things and I go through my repertoire and a student still isn't getting it. Then I sit down with my colleagues and are given 2-3 strategies that weren't necessarily in my repertoire. Sometimes that is what it takes. If that doesn't rectify it then we would gather additional data and meet again, and we continue to do that until we get to the point where we know the concern and that might now lead us to an Individual Education Plan and talking with that department. The teacher will be the one who communicates that concern very early on with the family. MTSS is not done in isolation. He used the example of difficulty with fractions noting there are many families in our district that can do extra work with their child at home and sometimes just hearing it from a different person the light bulb goes on.

Chairman Fareed remarked what she was hearing is that all the tools are in place to address the learning loss from the pandemic because it is really an expansion of a child's learning loss even for other reasons. Superintendent Corey stated there has always been a learning loss from summer. Even though summer vacation is the number 1 thing you can do with your child to help them learn, children forget things over the summer as well. We're looking at this in a way that we will approach it that either they missed it, they forgot it, or maybe even we didn't get to it because of what went on during the pandemic for that particular child.

Asked about utilizing volunteers to enhance food service, Superintendent Corey stated if the determination were made that the best and safest way to serve lunch at HPS is to stay within the classroom and we found that we were going to have a manpower shortage on certain days, he typically would reach out to the building administrator who would usually reach out to the PTA with a request. When we have done that we usually are able to fill gaps. It will not necessarily be a permanent gap because we are still hiring. It may be something where because of an adult getting symptoms and being unable to work that we need someone for a brief period of time.

Food service did a remarkable job going all the way back to March of 2020 when they served lunches that you could drive by and pick up then to delivering every lunch to classrooms. If we started out eating in cafeterias and we didn't feel that was going well or received new information from NH DHHS, we know where our next step is. We will not have to reinvent the wheel. Last year's plan was very rigid and is the most rigid where we would end up. Right now we are trying to see if we can balance somewhere in the middle because the social emotional piece of just coming to the cafeteria and seeing all your friends is important.

Chairman Fareed stated she is hyper concerned about the food service. She has been obsessively reading and has an acquaintance who is at the top of Epidemiology at Johns Hopkins, follows all of his posts, etc. The Delta variant is a different animal. It has a much higher transmission rate/speed, a compressed incubation period. We used to have a 10-day quarantine because it was thought the original wildfire Alpha variant had about a 5-10 day period before it really revealed itself. The Delta variant seems to have a much faster turnover and much more intensive symptoms. She is concerned that we are thinking if we have a student that comes up positive in the cafeteria one day we will pivot, but by then it could be that we have a much more significant issue. She personally would like to see something in place that maybe gives the PTA a heads up that we need this ready to roll. She would like a way of reducing the exposure in the cafeteria as much as possible. She could not agree more with the comments around the critical importance of the social aspect, but it won't do anyone any good if they are ill. She urged the Superintendent to put a lot of emphasis on reducing the density in these cafeteria rooms.

Chairman Fareed spoke of the recreation leagues, boy scouts and girl scouts and the desire to have them back in the buildings. She stated the need for a rule that applies to everyone, e.g., monitoring. Superintendent Corey noted the athletic piece will be discussed at the COOP School District with the Athletic Director taking the lead. His intent is to work through all the difficult issues there as it is the most intricate environment. Then we will know what we will do when we run cross country here, etc. A lot of students are already doing athletic pieces without masks. It is just a matter of what indoors will look like. He does not know the answer to that because last year a basketball team indoors wore masks. He does not think that will be the case this year. That will be known in the next week to 10 days as the first one of those that will be impacted will be girls volleyball. He does not know where the NHIAA will fall on that. The Athletic Director is monitoring that, and it will be discussed at the COOP School Board next week. There will be instances when a consistent solution can be utilized throughout the districts.

The differences will be for example at HPS where there is the smallest cafeteria. He will work with the principal, and they might decide that 3 classes are going to the cafeteria and 2 are eating in the classroom, etc. They will get to a point where they are comfortable, it is just that that information is not yet identified. At the same time it will not be a surprise; the plan will be publicized. Once the Administration goes through the three school board meetings, the plan along with the master plan will be posted online.

Chairman Fareed spoke of public attendance at all athletic events being permitted and asked if there would be a mask mandate for the public if there is a mask mandate for the students. Superintendent Corey stated if indoors then yes there would most likely be a mask mandate.

She questioned if visiting teams having access to the locker rooms is something that happens at HUES. Superintendent Corey stated that language was put in because when getting into basketball season the gym is used by travel teams. Before we get to basketball season, we will make that decision on whether we are playing in out-of-town leagues.

Chairman Fareed pointed out to the public that anything adults and the students do in the building becomes the problem of the custodian including exposure to health risks.

Member Mann stated he does not want to lose sight, mask or no mask, that the crown jewel, along with student safety, is keeping the schools open. For him the nightmare scenario is having a spike and having to shut everything down. He questioned if the Superintendent feels he has all the tools necessary to be able pivot appropriately or if there were areas that could be highlighted that are of concern. Superintendent Corey responded the biggest concern is the Board and community understanding that there is really no likelihood of room in Zoom because of the way it is being approached by the State. We would be coming at it very late, and we wouldn't have had the chance to talk with the unions. He does not think it would be supported by them. He believes there are some areas that are being created that will be a concern that neither the Board nor him can control.

He is very comfortable with the plan for each of the districts because whenever he has approached one of the boards indicating something that was needed for the students, he has been given the permission to go find the funding and make it happen. That is the same approach that would be taken. He spoke of some of the things that have been done to make improvements, e.g., old water bubblers transitioned to filling bottles, many of the toilets are automatic flush, paper towel dispensers are automatic, etc. All of those pieces were done with support of the boards last year because it improved the situation for students. We just happen to be in the midst of the building projects so our ventilation, safety, was already in the process of improvements. He may come to the board and say he has changed his mind and wants to do tents, etc. He feels the plan will work because the Board will support it, support it financially, and our Budget Committee has also been tremendous. Our parents

have been very understanding. There is a level of COVID fatigue that we are all facing. As one gentleman said tonight it will probably be with us for a while and we will just keep getting better at mitigating the risk so that it will be more like the traditional flu than what we are experiencing now.

Vice Chairman Kellner noted the Board is voting on approving the re-opening plan including a mask mandate. She questioned if there are aspects of the plan; specifically lunch in the cafeterias, that we don't agree with. Superintendent Corey stated the other piece of the motion was that the Board is authorizing the Superintendent to be able to change the plan as he sees fit, which is what was done last year. He heard the Board loud and clear that it would like more structure around the cafeteria. He will meet with the principals at the Administrative Retreat and will figure out ways to address those concerns. As much as the Board is voting on his recommendation, he is taking back their feedback.

Vice Chairman Kellner stated she is not comfortable with an entire grade having lunch in the cafeteria. She would like to see lunches outdoors or lunches in classrooms. Member Roy stated agreement. Superintendent Corey stated he would promise the Board that lunches would be adjusted at least to start the year and would inform the Board if any changes were going to be made if the data improves.

Chairman Fareed noted the motion states to make changes based on local conditions, but really, we also have the outstanding NH DHHS recommendations for quarantine. She questioned if the motion covers that contingency. Superintendent Corey stated his opinion it does, but if he felt it did not, he would ask the Board for a special meeting to be conducted prior to the opening of school.

Member Roy requested the Board be kept apprised of progress with regard to addressing the social/emotional needs of the students. Superintendent Corey suggested that could be made to be a standing agenda item so that the Board receives a monthly update. Information can also be shared in the Principals Report. Chairman Fareed was supportive of the idea. Member Roy spoke of the desire for a monthly update on the academic progress (lessening gaps). Superintendent Corey suggested the updates could alternate (educational one month and social/emotional the next).

#### **MOTION CARRIED**

#### **4-0-0**

Chairman Fareed spoke of having made a mistake by not representing the questions forwarded to her by School Board member Brooke Arthur. However, she is of the belief the questions were addressed in the discussion that took place, e.g., invest in outdoor spaces, funding for tools needed by teachers, enhanced social emotional focus.

She had asked if teachers already have access to microphone headsets to amplify through a mask. Superintendent Corey stated those devices are in place because of students who have hearing issues. They are used across the board so that we are not highlighting certain individuals.

Chairman Fareed emphasized the Board has not just voted to keep masks on the entire year no matter what. It voted on a reopening plan that allows the Board to fulfill its obligations to the safety of our students, employees, and their families as a reopening position. Last year she was not confident of the plan as she could not get past the idea that it was just to start and would be flexing as conditions changed. She learned that the Superintendent and staff were serious; they wanted to start a certain way with the flexibility of shifting as conditions shifted. In fact that is what we did. We added masks to recess when cases started to grow, we removed masks from recess when conditions allowed that to be a safe call, etc.

That is what we are doing; we're choosing a plan to get us rolling and we will adapt to conditions with great agility and alacrity as things improve, and should they not improve we have plans in place to respond to that condition as well.

- To see what action the Board will take regarding the Business Manager's recommendation regarding the retained fund balance

**MOTION BY MEMBER KELLNER TO RETAIN THE SUM OF UP TO TWO HUNDRED EIGHTY FOUR THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$284,000) OF SCHOOL FUND BALANCE FROM THE FY21 SCHOOL YEAR AS THE END OF YEAR AVAILABLE FUNDS ALLOW  
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANN**

ON THE QUESTION

Superintendent Corey introduced Donna Smith, Assistant Business Administrator for the Hollis and Brookline School Districts.

The request before the Board is for approval to retain the same amount as last year. As was mentioned, this provides the flexibility should something come up that is required/desired to be done during COVID; pool of funds not allocated anywhere within the budget. Also available is the Contingency Fund, which would be looked to first. With any expenditure, the Budget Committee is notified, a Public Hearing conducted, and a vote of the Board. That is something the district has not had to utilize.

If there is a need to adjust and could room in Zoom, there may be the need for the flexibility to hire someone to meet the needs of students. The auditors are finalizing their work. Funds will be returned to the tax base. The exact dollar amount will be known at the September meeting. Funds encumbered for the unit ventilator remain in place (December timeframe).

Chairman Fareed noted the district has never had to utilize the Contingency Fund. Superintendent Corey remarked it was discussed one year for a staffing issue after growth was experienced; however, the funds were able to be identified from within the budget.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**4-0-0**

NON-PUBLIC

**MOTION BY MEMBER KELLNER THAT THE BOARD GO INTO NON-PUBLIC SESSION PURSUANT TO RSA 91-A:3 II (c) TO DISCUSS A MATTER, WHICH IF DISCUSSED IN PUBLIC, WOULD LIKELY AFFECT ADVERSELY THE REPUTATION OF A PERSON, OTHER THAN A MEMBER OF THE BODY OR AGENCY ITSELF**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANN**

*Viva Voce Roll Call was conducted, which resulted as follows:*

Yea: Robert Mann, Carryl Roy, Amy Kellner, Tammy Fareed

4

Nay:

0

**MOTION CARRIED**

*The Board went into non-public session at 8:38 p.m.*

*The Board came out of non-public session at 8:42 p.m.*

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION BY MEMBER MANN TO ADJOURN**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER ROY**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**4-0-0**

*The August 11, 2021, meeting of the Hollis School Board was adjourned at 8:42 p.m.*

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signed \_\_\_\_\_