

**HOLLIS BROOKLINE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL BOARD
AUGUST 18, 2021
MEETING MINUTES**

A regular meeting of the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board was conducted on Wednesday, August 18, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. at the Hollis Brookline Middle School.

Holly Deurloo Babcock, Chairman, presided:

Members of the Board Present: Tom Solon, Vice Chairman
 Beth Janine Williams, Secretary
 Elizabeth Brown
 Kate Stoll
 Cindy VanCoughnett
 Krista Whalen

Members of the Board Absent:

Also in Attendance: Andrew Corey, Superintendent
 Gina Bergskaug, Asst. Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction
 Tim Girzone, Principal, Hollis Brookline High School
 Patrick West, Principal, Hollis Brookline Middle School

APPOINTMENT OF PROCESS OBSERVER

Chairman Deurloo Babcock appointed Member Williams as Process Observer.

AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS - None

NOMINATIONS / RESIGNATIONS / CORRESPONDENCE

Superintendent Corey informed the Board of a letter of Intent to Retire received from Robert Ouellette, Assistant Principal, Hollis Brookline High School, with an effective date of June 30, 2022. In his letter, Mr. Ouellette remarked he considers himself to have been blessed to have served as an administrator in such a progressive and supportive community. He is in deep fortune to have been a colleague to an extraordinary staff and is humbled that parents have entrusted him with their children’s education. The past 26 years at Hollis Brookline High School has been the highlight of his work career and he is grateful for the many opportunities afforded to him by the district. Superintendent Corey thanked Mr. Ouellette for his service to the students and community-at-large.

**MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO ACCEPT THE LETTER OF INTENT TO RETIRE FROM ROBERT OUELLETTE WITH AN EFFECTIVE DATE OF JUNE 30, 2022
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS**

ON THE QUESTION

Chairman Deurloo Babcock spoke of appreciation of Mr. Ouellette’s years of service, his humor, and what he has brought to the school district for the past 26 years.

MOTION CARRIED

7-0-0

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board [July 21, 2021](#)

The following amendment was offered:

Page 28, Line 8; replace “EBD” with “EBBD”

**MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO ACCEPT, AS AMENDED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WHALEN
MOTION CARRIED
4-0-3**

Members Williams, Stoll, and VanCoughnett Abstained

PUBLIC INPUT

Chairman Deurloo Babcock read into the record the language of policy [BEDH](#) – Public Participation at Board Meetings:

“The primary purpose of School Board meetings is to conduct the business of the Board as it relates to school policies, programs and operations. The Board encourages residents to attend Board meetings so that they may become acquainted with the operation and programs of the schools. All official meetings of the Board shall be open to the press and public. However, the Board reserves the right to meet and to adjourn or recess a meeting at any time. The Board also reserves the right to enter non-public session at any time, in accordance with the provisions RSA [91-A:3](#).”

In order to assure that persons who wish to appear before the Board may be heard and, at the same time, it may conduct its meetings properly and efficiently, the Board adopts as policy the following procedures and rules pertaining to public participation at Board meetings:

- 1. The first 15 minutes will be set aside for citizens to address the Board. This period may be extended by a majority vote of the Board. Speakers must provide their name and address and will be allotted three minutes per person.*
- 2. Consistent with RSA [91-A:3](#), Policy [BEDB](#), and the laws pertaining to student and family privacy rights, the Board will not place any matter on the public agenda that is to be properly discussed in a non-public session. Complaints regarding individual employees, personnel or students will be directed to the Superintendent in accord with Policies KE and KEB.*
- 3. All speakers are to conduct themselves in a civil manner. Obscene, libelous, defamatory or violent statements will be considered out of order and will not be tolerated. The Board Chair may terminate the speaker's privilege of address if the speaker does not follow this rule of order.*

Persons appearing before the Board are reminded that members of the Board are without authority to act independently as individuals in official matters. Questions shall be directed to the Board Chair.”

Policy BEDB reads in part:

“Additionally, the Board reserves the right to limit public discussion at Board meetings to agenda items only.”

This has been the practice of the Board for many years. She stated the desire to extend the time allotted for public input and requested residents wishing to address the Board stand to make that desire known and allow for a sense of the amount of time needed.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock informed the Board of a minor/student wishing to address the Board. No objection was noted.

MOTION BY MEMBER WILLIAMS TO EXTEND THE PUBLIC INPUT PORTION OF THE AGENDA TO SIXTY (60) MINUTES

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER STOLL

MOTION CARRIED

7-0-0

Chairman Deurloo Babcock noted the Board has read the many emails received, has listened to all input received and is processing it as best it can. Public input is not a time for back and forth discussion but for the public to provide its input.

The public comment period was declared open at 6:10 p.m.

Laurie Miller, 14 Forestview Drive, Hollis

Thanked the Board for its work. She pointed out that the audience is likely not a fair representation of the parents and community as there are many people avoiding coming to the meeting because they are uncomfortable in a situation where they are in a closed room with no masks. She is hopeful the Board will go along with the Hollis and Brookline districts, start the year off with universal masking and create a set of criteria that allows for moving away from that.

Fred Hubert, 68 Hideaway Lane, Hollis

Read into the record “Last year our administration proposed a plan that allowed families to choose in-person or remote learning and specified masks would be optional for in-person. Then you allowed yourselves to be held hostage and coerced by the unions into Memorandums of Agreement mandating masks. This tied our hands. Even as all our neighbor districts lifted theirs, our mandates remained in place until the end of the school year. It is no surprise that an email was sent the very next day lifting our mandate.

Now our staff population is fully vaccinated at least to the point that they desire to be. They have no excuse, and you have no excuse either. There is a long list of failures with regard to COVID policies, many of them on your watch. Here are a few salient examples; the 2020 graduation was outdoors with a strict limit of three persons per family pod, Principal Barnes was adamant that no pod could exceed 3 persons. He adamantly refused any exceptions whatsoever and families simply had to choose who could attend. He had no explanation when pressed about the pods of four that were assembled for families graduating twins.

There were mandatory masks for the duration between a student athlete’s car and the practice field, but as soon as they walked on the practice field, they could remove their mask. Mandatory masks during practices and competition for tennis and track and field, mandatory masks during recess, yeah that is the younger districts, but it was driven by the unions, and you are complicit.

Student athletes were allowed to participate in wrestling, but this was deemed okay because they weren't allowed to shake hands. These examples equate to illogical practices such as closing public restrooms and placing a portable toilet in front of a locked facility. None of those examples are backed by science or based on even a shred of logic.

The opening plan for this year has a minimum of 3' between students in classrooms, but not in the notoriously cramped cafeteria. How could anyone consider that? You may as well say that it is okay for guests to come to your house and urinate in your swimming pool as long as they do so only in the deep end.

We expect our schools to teach our children to be critical thinkers and yet we are displaying an inability to do so ourselves. I would like to commend the Bedford School District for making masks optional yesterday and the Merrimack School District previously. It has also come to my attention that this board, or at least some people on this board, are actively seeking ways to further limit or even eliminate public input. Please don't go there."

James Gill, 30 Milton Place, Hollis

Was raised to say what you mean and mean what you say, just don't say it meanly. A definition of corruption is to engage in improper conduct. For example a prosecutor who withholds exculpatory evidence is defined as corrupt and can lose their license. Another form of corruption can be caused by pride. Board members were elected to office to reflect the will of your constituents. When representing your own will because of what you think or believe, whether you know it or not, you are corrupting the democratic process.

In terms of the courtroom drama on this public health narrative, much of the exculpatory evidence that would do away with masks and all kinds of things by all kinds of experts, many of them pioneering the mRNA technology like Dr. Malone, are being censored.

AboutHollis got a petition to let the Board know what the will of the people is in Hollis. Within a day and a half it was shut down/censored. Enterprising people jumped on another platform trying to keep it going and it was shut down in less than a couple of hours. Look around us, we are being censored in every format/every platform if it doesn't agree with this narrative being passed on from on high with no accountability. You folks are accountable to the constituents of Hollis and Brookline and to do otherwise is to tell the very people that elected you, the plastic surgeon who spoke a week ago, the lawyers, the business owners; no we are not only not going to give you a choice, we're going to tell you what to do, we will mandate it. It is not a question of money for a building or gym, we're talking about your own children.

Ultimately to vote to mandate and overrule the will of your constituents is an incredible act of hubris and a corruption of the democratic process, and he thinks the board cares too much about the constituents to do that.

Aaron Niebel, 13 Milton Place, Hollis

Last year was his sophomore year, and it was basically ruined. He suffered from depression. Never before has he suffered that much with his mental health. He did not understand at first, but it was just because the year was not normal. It was stressful and he would sleep a lot not knowing why. He would sleep to escape, and stress eat. Every time he thinks about going back to school now, he gets a pit in his stomach when normally he would feel very excited to have a fresh start.

Every time he hears about masks being mandated in the schools, he wonders why is it his family can go out to a restaurant and eat without a mask, even entering the restaurant without a mask, and he cannot get an education without having a mask mandated for 5 days/week 7+ hours/day. He asked those in the room who supported having masks optional to stand.

Jon Garruba, 30 Meadow Drive, Hollis

Masks are damaging to children's social emotional development. That is a fact. He witnessed this firsthand last year. His children and family were hurt. He has a child with sensory processing disorder; masks are particularly difficult for her. The added stress of masks in addition to an already difficult school situation brought her to the point where she flat out refused to go to school due to anxiety, which he believes is being experienced school-wide.

Remote learning is a complete failure for her. Additionally, this summer he could clearly see the social impairment experienced by his other daughter and caused by COVID concerns. Masks hurt his children more than the risk of contracting COVID. He has thoroughly evaluated the situation, and it is clear for him and his family the risk of COVID pales in comparison to the unknown lifelong impacts of continuing masking our children and their mental health.

He would never suggest knowing what is best for anyone else. Each individual has their own risks and benefits to weigh when being part of society. He questioned if it is the job of the Board to judge what is best for him and his family or to decide if it is okay to harm his children for the protection of others. Fortunately, they don't have to make that choice. The clear choice is freedom. Optional masks are the most respectful to all community members. There are vaccines available for children 12 and up. The COVID risk for vaccinated individuals is less than contracting the flu. He questioned if the Board would harm the social development of children to protect them from the flu. Hollis has never required masks to protect children from the flu.

He reiterated requiring masks would continue to hurt his children and countless other community members. He requested the Board side with freedom and respect for all; make masks optional.

Harold Cadman, 169 Depot Road, Hollis

Stated his opposition to the mandatory use of masks in Hollis schools for the following reasons:

1. First and foremost anyone under the age of 25 has a 99.992% survival rate, which means COVID-19 is less deadly to our kids than the common flu and a near 0% chance of them becoming sick or dying from COVID-19. The masks provide zero protection to school-age kids.
2. The survival rate of those under 70, teachers for example, is 99.82%, which is nearly identical to the common flu. If we don't mask up for the common flu, then the masking of our kids to protect teachers is simply child abuse.
3. The mortality statistics are erroneously high because according to Dr. Birx of the CDC, "We, in this country are taking a very liberal approach to counting COVID-19 deaths." She goes on to say, "If someone dies with COVID-19, we are counting that as a COVID-19 death." Obviously, the survival rate in the U.S. is lower than it should be, which fortifies his two earlier points.
4. It is coming out slowly but surely that there are affective therapies and treatments for COVID-19 that have been suppressed by the CDC and the WHO in order to authorize the rollout of an experimental warp-speed vaccine for wide-spread or potentially mandatory use. We all know that Hydroxychloroquine has been outlawed by the CDC for the treatment of COVID-19 in some states, and more and more doctors are reporting how effective it is in treating the virus. Another treatment, Ivermectin, has received even higher reviews, but is also being suppressed. The law states vaccine cannot be promoted if there are effective therapies to address the disease. This is why these therapies were not sanctioned as safe even though they have been safely used for 50 years as a prophylactic to healthy travelers heading to virally contagious countries.

In summary, given the above facts, there is no good reason to require mandatory masks in our school. That decision is to be made by the parents and not by bureaucrats armed with erroneous information.

Jim Crittenden, 232 Worcester Road, Hollis

Remarked with a hat tip to Sesame Street, his comments are sponsored by the letter T and the number 0 and peanuts. The T is for totalitarianism because that is what we are suffering under. We are being pushed, having all of these things jammed down our throats; do what you are told to do and stop asking all of these questions.

The next time you see someone driving down the street with all his windows up, alone in the car, and his mask on you might ask why he is doing that; is he protecting himself, does he think he is protecting someone else, is he just virtue signaling, or maybe he is an immigrant from a totalitarian culture like China or Russia and is afraid of being arrested and sent off to a re-education camp. If you think it sounds a little hyperbolic, you may not have noticed the news this morning that Australia has just started building such camps for people who refuse to take the vaccine.

The number 0; last year the CDC reported 335 COVID deaths for children between the ages of 12 and 18. It took the John, Hopkins group to look into it this last summer and say were those with COVID or death due to COVID. What they found is the number of those students that had perfectly normal healthy immune systems was 0. All of them had compromised immune systems. What do we do about that? How do you deal with children coming to this school that have a compromised immune system? If you have a peanut allergy problem you can ban peanuts from the whole school, it is not a big deal. If you have a problem like this where you have a compromised immune system in a student or 2 or 3, these are special needs kids. You can't throw masks on everybody else in the school. You have heard how bad this masking is, how dangerous it is for medical and social and emotional health. You really cannot do that. What you should do is treat those few students that are immune compromised like special needs kids. We identify and take care of those kids in whatever special way and let all the other kids come to school without masks and do their thing.

Maria Hubert, 68 Hideaway Lane, Hollis

Provided handouts for Board members. She has been a data analytics professional for 30 years and specializes in forensic data analysis. This summer was predicted last year. A variant of COVID would never be more dangerous. It would be more communicable but never more dangerous. If you are hearing otherwise, it is a lie. The greatest scientific minds in the world concur on that.

She decided she wanted to download the CDC data once again (CDC.data.gov). They have data sets for all different kinds of metrics. She did some aggregate analysis on it. She has not watched the news in over a year and has trusted the scientists and doctors she has connected with on LinkedIn that are frantically trying to get the word out, in the face of all kinds of censorship, that these protocols are dangerous and unnecessary and causing the virus to continue to mutate.

The handout provides the information she discovered having run the numbers; for the period January 2020 to July 2021, the numbers in the State are way down from last year at the same time. Monthly deaths in July of 2021 are 15, and this was elderly people at the end of life. The same period last year the number was 44. She does not understand why everyone is so afraid of what is going on right now. There is nothing going on, and the data proves it.

Mary LeBaron, 8 Parker Road, Brookline

Mother of 4. Academically last year was appalling. She and her husband decided on remote learning for their 8th grader due to the fact that it is unhealthy for children to wear masks 6⁺ hours a day especially considering the CDC itself indicates the masks made available to the general public do not suffice to prevent the virus from entering respiratory passages. Her 8th grader nearly failed 3 classes. He is an A and B student. She has never seen him hate learning more than he did last year. His teachers asked, in the spring, if he could come back to the building, but masks were still enforced so he could not. They said that kids who had returned to in-school learning were doing better than remote students, but we had no way of participating because of the mask policy. Isn't that discrimination?

Concerned HB parents have been sharing relevant and updated information regarding the virus throughout the year, yet you refuse to make any changes. Even after the teachers and staff have had the opportunity to be vaccinated, the mask policy did not change. She understood that at the start of the 2021 school year we did not have enough information to make better informed decisions, but the adjustments that should have been made with the information presented did not occur.

Now we know better. We know children do not spread or get COVID as adults do. We know not a single child in New Hampshire has died of COVID. We have the JAMA study providing evidence that masks are not effective and are harmful. We know there are several notably larger school systems in the State that have found a way to conduct in-person learning without masks. We can find a way to do that too.

It is her experience that the SAU made decisions that benefitted and legally protected themselves but left her children vulnerable. The mask policy discriminated against students that cannot wear masks and left them with a sub-par academic year. Another year of masking is unacceptable. Let them return to school this year mask free and the parents decide what is best for their children.

Jaima Wilder, 48 Pierce Lane, Hollis

Suggested the Board take a moment to pause, to rewind time a year and a half and think about what our lives looked like before we heard about COVID. Think about what the kids did for activities, how they interacted, and how they learned, and you taught them how to be empathetic and show kindness and love and care for people. With everything that is going on in our world, we should take a pause to remember what life should look like. There will be viruses that come and go. We have gotten rid of the flu because of COVID, but we sit here in a room full of people and the first speaker said that you are not seeing who in Town feels the way they do, but we are the people that are coming and telling you how we feel.

It is not good for the psychological wellbeing of children to be masked. They learn how to care from people and how to interact by seeing facial expressions. Masks do not protect people especially the children in schools if they are wearing them in school and then playing sports and walking down to Monument Square to hang out. You can put a band-aid on a problem that you are scared of, but what you are doing is causing division and not representing the voice of the people that elected you.

We are here because we want the right to choose what is best for our children. She has 5 children and does not want them to wear masks. She does not want them to breathe in their own carbon dioxide, to learn it is okay to listen to what a government says to you; we are not being given true information. She understands that when last year happened that we shut down and went to Zoom meetings. She could see the effect it had on her children. You might be worried about people getting sick, but you are not taking into consideration the psychological damage that you will do to 100s of children.

There is no evidence that the masks will stop them from contracting the illness or from spreading it. It makes some people feel safer, but you don't have the right as school board members to tell us what is best for our children's health.

Aaron Penkacik, 133 Dow Road, Hollis

Does not have any kids in the school district, but cares about the kids in Hollis. He has heard the discussion about follow the science. He remarked most of you aren't old enough to remember posters from the past; I have no flies thanks to DDT, the purity of white asbestos, fake snow, etc. That was science. the science here has been so convoluted that nobody knows what the right answer is.

Looking around the table he could see that some Board members had masks on, and others did not. He suggested that was because none of them understand what the science is because the CDC doesn't understand what the science is. What we have heard about the impact of mask wearing on children psychologically and their emotional development is true and is significant.

You can look at the suicide rates in the teen population, which has skyrocketed in large part due to the psychological negative effects of forcing isolation and forcing masks. Choices have consequences and that is what life is about. You weigh the risks and benefits. You as a school board are making choices that will impact the lives of students and children for the rest of their life. You should not mandate that they wear masks.

Karen Dodge, 73 Alsun Drive, Hollis

Knows we are living in an unprecedented medical and political experiment. She used the word experiment intentionally. She worked for the Federal Government for 20 years, and if anybody wants to think that the CDC is an honest broker of science then they need to review what is on their website this very moment, and their plans for the future of this country.

What upsets her is that the only justifications that have been cited for making masks mandatory is the same source. There isn't one source that has been identified that isn't saying the exact same thing. The reality is that we have lived with COVID-19 since 2005. The last two years are unprecedented because it was decided at whatever level that this COVID-19 could be manipulated and used to implement theories, practices, and remove our freedoms by skillfully keeping the population afraid.

There is no scientific evidence that masks keep you safe or protected. From sitting in a classroom 6 hours/day she can tell you the whole point of masking was to deter children from touching their faces, from spreading perhaps whatever they were carrying at that moment. Masks have become instruments. They touch their faces some 30 times more than they ever would adjusting the mask, taking it off, etc. They leave the mask around their neck, which is the worst place they could leave it because of the bacteria around your neck.

Some of the questions that need to be asked include do used and loaded masks become sources of enhanced transmission for the wearer and others? Do masks become collectors and retainers of pathogens that the mask wearer would otherwise avoid when breathing without a mask?

Lea Scott, 167 Proctor Hill Road, Hollis

Will be a senior this year. Her father has stated Superintendent Corey listens to students sometimes more than parents. She asked him and the School Board to please end the mask mandate in our schools. Masks are really uncomfortable and make it hard to learn and hard to interact with friends. For the seniors, COVID and these masks are a big part of their high school experience. The last part of sophomore year and all of the junior year were ruined. She wished to have the senior year without masks.

She has hearing aids, and these masks prevent her from seeing people's lips move, which is important for her to understand what they are saying. It is hard to talk with friends and to understand in class. The solution for her last year was to be put in a quiet library watching classes online. She was alone most of the time. She requested the mask mandate be ended so that she can be back in class enjoying it with her friends.

The first 14 years of her life were spent in a communist China before being adopted into her family here in Hollis. In China, there is no freedom, there is no voting to elect school board members, there is no freedom for speech or meetings like this to debate or try to convince people to do things a different way. In China there are only mandates. Those mandates come from the very top of the communist party and whatever they say you must do. It doesn't matter if the decision has bad consequences, it doesn't matter if the mandate doesn't make sense, you have no choice. She loves America because of the freedoms she has. So many Americans don't appreciate it because it is all you have ever known. Freedom is valuable. Her dad says that freedom is like muscle that must be exercised to be healthy. She loves America because she can vote and someday start a business on her very own. She loves America because she can stand at the microphone and speak to him even as a student and he values her input.

She sees in America that things are looking more like China, how the very top of government is issuing mandates and expects everyone to follow. She asked the Board to act like Americans and exercise their muscle of freedom. Evaluate the evidence and show your independence as elected school board of this community. End the mandate and please give us kids the freedom from these masks.

Andrew Scott, 167 Proctor Hill Road, Hollis

Is Lea Scott's dad. Most of what he wanted to say has been said. He reiterated that especially for the COOP School District, all but a handful of our kids are 12 and up and have access to the vaccine. He believes since they have that opportunity as well as the teachers, it puts this decision in a different category than some of the decisions being made by other school boards. He encouraged the Board to end the mask mandate. The data is pretty clear on how young people respond to COVID. We are incredibly thankful that it is the way it is, or it has played out the way it has. In 2013 he had a child who got the flu, which turned into pneumonia, and she almost died. She was on a heart/lung bypass machine for a week and was in the hospital for a month. He pointed that out not wanting to come across as callous when talking about deaths. Every child who dies is a tragedy and for the family and community that experiences that it is deep and difficult.

Between 200-1,000 kids die each year from the flu depending on the severity of the strand. Since the beginning of the pandemic a little over 350 children have died from COVID. The previous flu season he believes it was 477 children 18 and younger died from the flu. He didn't expect the schools would all mask when his child went back to school after her incident, we don't mask because of the flu. At this point, with the knowledge we have, we should not force our kids to mask.

Sometimes it is hard to exercise that muscle of freedom, but he encouraged the Board to do that. He is thankful to hear that Bedford has decided to make their schools mask optional. There are other communities in the State and around the country that have made that decision as well.

Ariela Torgersen, 61 Hannah Drive, Hollis

Thanked the Board for its hard work. She is not anti-mask for those who want to wear a mask, she is against making it mandatory. You can be in favor of something, but still be opposed to making it mandatory. She is against wearing masks for the simple reason she feels they are not effective.

Cloth and surgical masks do not filter out microscopic particles such as viruses. That is a known fact. The masks our kids wear are not having a tight seal around their faces, which makes it ineffective. The most important thing is that once you touch your mask it becomes contaminated making it harmful. Soccer coaches are telling her son you have to drink a gallon of water a day and she is telling her kids to constantly hydrate especially when it is hot out. They are touching their masks all day long. They are touching surfaces and then their masks which are damp and a breathing ground for other harmful germs and bacteria. Not only is it ineffective, it is harmful.

She reiterated there have been 0 deaths in the State in the 0-19 age category with flu exceeding that. No one has mentioned the natural immunity that she believes many of the kids already have. Think of all of the people who could have been Asymptomatic, those who possibly had COVID before we knew it was COVID, to say people have positive antibodies and will still be masking up indefinitely.

She addressed a statement she has heard many times from people who are pro mask; that we stayed safe because of the masks, or we stayed in session because we wore masks. We know that as soon as the kids walked out of the building every single mask came off. People were in cars together, people socialized in large groups inside and out. Even when we shut the schools down Nichols Field was so packed her husband could not find a parking space to pick up their child. You cannot say that kids have to wear a mask from 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and stay safe and then immediately from 2:30 to 10:00 p.m. no one is wearing masks.

Cliff Mendling, 34 Alsun Drive, Hollis

Applauded the Board for its decision last year for allowing parents to choose what was best for their children; remote or in-person. We saw in Nashua they had remote only. It was a disaster for most students.

Here we are again this year. You had the opportunity to be courageous and allow parents to decide what is best for their children again. This year we have a lot more data. Last year everyone thought masks were a good idea. This year we have vaccines, we have more therapeutics, and we have seen the effects of masking our children emotionally and psychologically. He spoke of an email he sent to the Board providing information regarding the negative effects as well as the ineffectiveness of masks.

After reading, you will clearly see the benefits of wearing a mask to protect you from COVID are very low and the negative emotional and physical effects are much greater for children. He shared a story of taking his daughter to her first practice on a travel volleyball team last year. She was the only girl from Hollis. When he picked her up, he asked how it went and if she made any new friends. She looked at him like he had two heads, and said dad we're wearing masks, its impossible to make new friends, its hard to talk to anyone, you can't read their faces. That is when he learned how these masks are really affecting our children during such an important development stage.

He has spoken with several teachers and learned students this past year are not engaged in class and not participating. They say a lot of that is due to the distraction of the mask and the fear of COVID. We know that Amherst and now Bedford have left the decision to the parents, and also the UK is separating itself from the U.S. They are not requiring face coverings in schools. Dr. Susan Hopkins, Healthcare Epidemiologist Consultant in Infectious Diseases and Microbiology at Public Health England was quoted saying "It is important that school children don't wear face coverings because COVID infection rates are low among their age group and wearing face coverings could affect their long-term development." He asked the Board to be courageous once again and leave the decision up to the parents.

Diane Pauer, 12 Westview road, Brookline

Stated her belief everyone in attendance had the same goal of keeping our children safe. She thanked the School Board for their efforts on behalf of all of the children and everyone who took the time to contribute to the discussion.

We must clearly define the problem in order to arrive at a rationale effective solution. She believes the problem to be addressed is protecting the students and staff from a virus. For the purposes of this discussion, we must understand what the characteristics of this virus are. Corona virus has a particulate size of 0.1 – 0.2 microns. We know this based on the scientific evidence from the CDC and other respected scientific institutions. We must then carefully consider the proposed solution to the problem; masks. There are a number of mask options. This board has not specified what type of mask they are considering mandating. However, the best of the best is the N95 mask. N95 masks are rated to filter particulates of 0.3 microns or larger. Therefore, the best of the best is unable to filter the Corona virus effectively. Moreover, a National Institute of Health 1995 study found that in order for an N95 mask to achieve filtration efficiency of 95%, the particulate size must be 0.75 microns or greater and a tight seal must be made. Therefore, in order for these N95 masks to be effective they must be professionally fit tested. Notably an N95 mask cannot be fit tested for use by children. According to OSHA, N95 masks are not to be worn for more than 1 hour at a time by anyone.

Masks of any type are never intended to be worn by anyone for more than 8 hours at a time. To wear a mask in such a manner creates unintended consequences such as skin degradation, decreased oxygen levels resulting in hypoxia, harboring bacteria, and weakened immune systems. While your intentions may be well meaning to protect our children and our staff from a virus, it is clear that your solution to mandate wearing a mask does not solve the problem.

Marin Bateman, 12 Woodland Drive, Brookline

Quarantine was hard. The isolation got to her. Throughout it all she held onto the hope that when school would start, things would get better. Perhaps they would still have to wear masks, but she would be able to interact with her friends. She realized she was wrong when the school year first started. The past school year was the worst she has ever had. She had very limited interaction with her friends. Was told by many teachers she was not allowed to hug them. She was not able to do any of the things she looked forward to. It took a toll on her not being able to go to the people she needed most when she needed to. She has never felt so alone and so isolated and hopeless.

During the school year, she couldn't eat or sleep. Most days it was hard to just zoom in on the days when you were forced to. She asked how much longer this would go on; when is enough going to be enough?

Anna Birch, 16 Broad Street, Hollis

She thanked the Board for all they did to provide the students with an in-person opportunity last year. Flexibility was key last year and is important this year. Her son is going into 9th grade, and she really wanted to tell him he didn't have to wear his mask. She believes we all thought that was going to be happening. In the last couple of weeks things have changed and it doesn't feel like it did then. She feels we're all going on a bit of a roller coaster ride. She trusts the Board and Administration to have the best interests of our students, staff and larger family members. She lives in a multi-family house. Her mother takes care of her nephew who has advanced asthma. They are starting to make different decisions now of wearing masks and are not allowed to go in her apartment anymore. Things are changing. What was true a month ago may not be true now.

It is not perfect, but she is hopeful we can put some faith in the Board and our families that we can be more flexible. This is not an easy decision. She supports wearing masks and maybe it will change down the road. Maybe benchmarks can be identified for when we do change it.

Joe Garruba, 28 Winchester Dive, Hollis

Mention was made of stopping the clapping, and we only have an hour for public input. The clapping is telling you where the crowd stands, but it is not just for you. There are people here who have never spoken at a podium before. That clapping is for them too. He asked that the Board have the patience to put up with a few minutes of extra clapping before trying to stop that. We are not even at an hour here so if we talk about the process, the process is very civil and is the epitome of a participatory democracy. He is very much against any kind of actions this Board might be considering in restricting public speech in the future.

The agenda identifies the Articles of Agreement (AoA). He stated he would ask questions and would like the Board, during Deliberations, to explain what is occurring. He is concerned the Board is choosing a path to hold a special meeting to amend the AoA. He spoke about that concern at last month's meeting and has not received an explanation of why a special meeting is needed to address non-substantial changes. A special meeting held at an unusual time is likely to not be well attended. We have enough serious problems to address without adding a special meeting at a time when the district is working to recover the educational losses our children suffered over the last year. He asked for an explanation of why we need a special meeting.

Ahran Dunsmoor, 11 Flagg Road, Hollis

New to Town. Commended the Board for the excellent reputation Hollis has as a Town and school. One of the big motivators for moving here was because of the great school district. Is the father of 7. Has heard a lot of great arguments both for and against masks. He thinks that diversity of opinion is a real strength of the Town and country. The solution that some people proposed of allowing parents to choose really reflects that diversity of opinion and lets us live those values that we have.

As a father of 7 he has seen a lot of diversity in terms of his children and their experience with masks. He provided a personal anecdote across the spectrum of his children. He has a daughter that wears masks like fashion accessories and loves it. He has 2 children who, in these very formative teenage years, had horrible acne outbreaks that really impacted their self esteem so much so that one stayed home for an extra couple of weeks to get control of their flair-up because of the mask wearing. He has another child that is very outgoing and witty but told him that he didn't talk in school because no one could understand him. He has a daughter

who has speech challenges, and she will talk and talk, but no one would understand her. Luckily, she was undaunted and would continue to talk and talk. He has a lot of hope for her and her resilience.

He thinks the idea that parents can decide what is best for their children is really where he stands, and he hopes at the end of all this, that is where the Board stands.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock noted the public comment period had reached the duration established. She requested the last speaker be the last person in line.

Connie Lawrence, 9 Gilson Road, Brookline

Pointed out masks are on an Emergency Use Authorization. She can find no studies in regard to children wearing masks anywhere. In regard to human rights violations, a view of any human rights website shows mask wearing is the first step to depersonalization and torture. She is much more concerned about teen suicide rates than she is about the COVID rates when they can't even produce a COVID death in children who didn't have underlying conditions and now there has been the ability for teachers and students to get the vaccination if they wanted it. If the Board does a mandatory mask mandate, she believes because of EUA, lawsuits can be expected.

Maria Hubert, 68 Hideaway Lane, Hollis

For the parents that want their children to wear masks in school because they feel their child is protected that is fine. If they believe the mask is working, what difference does it make what another child is doing? We don't want our children to be mandated to wear masks. We want children to make the choice and the parents to make the choice.

Larry Andrade, 4 Pullman Drive, Hollis

Had not intended to speak having no kids or close relatives in the school system. It is irrelevant to him whether kids wear masks or not, and he can appreciate the sense of responsibility the Board feels to keep people safe. He was reading something about the Gen Zs. He read something from someone familiar with technology who knows the downside. Apparently, there is a real issue with the younger generation and the use of iPhones, etc. It interferes with their ability to interact with other people. He quoted the individual he was referring to "they are increasingly homebound, jobless when they get older, dislocated, lonely, lethargic, physically weak and depressed, taking prescription pain pills, and 35% are more likely to commit suicide than previous less technical generations." There is a real issue already with younger people not having relationships with other people because of the technology.

He stated the desire for the Board to consider that. The whole masking thing seems to be adding another layer of difficulty for them where they are experiencing all of these other problems and not relating to other people. That has to show up in their ability to get a good education.

Tom Whalen, 218 Worcester Road, Hollis

Is decidedly anti-mask. It is a horrible suboptimal option for children and adults. We may disagree on why that is the case, but none of us would like to wear masks if we didn't have to. The anecdotal stories that were shared were touching. He feels for the kids who are going to school, it is probably not their best year of school this year, and certainly wasn't last year. The only thing worse to him than masks would be Zoom meetings for classrooms.

He had to think about why the Board has to make this choice tonight. He thought back about a choice that he made back in February of this year when he got his second dose of the vaccine. Hollis and Brookline are affluent, highly educated communities, and yet we have 50% full vaccination rate in the community. He thinks the choice has been ripped out of their hands. The community failed us in not doing their duty in a democracy to give up small freedoms to enjoy the great freedoms that we have. To the people behind him that don't have vaccinations and are complaining about masks, he would say look in the mirror; you have made a choice. He respects they can make a choice, but choices always have consequences. The consequence is that they ripped the decision from your hands about what to do this year. We are about to get overrun by the Delta variant. That is not historical, that is present day. A lot of historical data was reported tonight, and that is not accurate to evaluate the effect of the Delta variant on children.

The Board has to decide. The community will support it. He feels that they don't have a choice because of the community. He thanked the Board for their efforts.

Rich Manley, 39 Truell Road, Hollis

He had not intended to come to the meeting but was driving through Town and saw a notice. He recognized many of his fellow townspeople would be here and wanted to come and learn what was on people's minds. He has learned a lot. People have brought forth what he thinks are legitimate concerns.

In the analysis of what the Board does is it makes policy. For what the Board must consider and what we as the townspeople must understand is it's not a mask or no mask situation, the Board is in the business of mitigating risk for the children that are required to enter into the school.

What are the tools the Board has at its disposal where it can mitigate risk for the children of Hollis and Brookline as they enter the school buildings? As you look at all of those things, certainly medical exceptions, religious exceptions would be included in any potential policy one would imagine to account for some of those difficulties. But as the Board hears the concerns of the parents, physical and psychological concerns for their children, its duty, it seems to him, is to weight that against the duty to all of the children. The statistics were heard. The job of the Board is to analyze data.

We have very few deaths in the State. He believes that is because school boards across the State and the State itself has been working to mitigate this crisis for some time. He was surprised to hear the statistic about the vaccination rate and was surprised he had not known it was that low. Hopefully that will not be the case going forward.

As a State as a whole we have done pretty well because we have taken proactive steps to stem the crisis. It appears to be now impacting children because they don't have a vaccine available. He concluded by saying the Board heard testimonies from students; it has been a difficult year for kids. They have had some great difficulties working through Zoom. His child graduated this year and spent 13 years in the Hollis Brookline School Systems, the last one as a senior with all of the experiences here, but he had a pretty good year considering everything. He is off to the college of his choice. He went to the graduation, and he was so proud to see all of his classmates who were celebrating their very good years in Hollis Brookline.

Tiffany Testa, 101 Mooar Hill Road, Hollis

We are in the classroom, and she is a teacher who has to teach the students of every passionate parent that came forward to speak. Right now what she is thinking is these are the parents that had the guts to come up here. She heard one parent say well if we show up and we use our voice, but she knows as a teacher she must also consider the silent voices, she must also consider every single student. She is scared as hell because she does not know how to do it again. She was not wearing a mask because she knows the trauma that masks caused and the inability at this age level to do effective learning with masks. She knows the social and emotional learning aspects of learning and the critical foundation of trauma. She is informed and tooled. She was told that we will go back with masks. She processed it. She was crying because she did not know how to fail her kids again. She just listened and an entire community care about masks. We should care, you should care about how we are transitioning our kids back so they can engage in deep critical thinking in a time of absolute trauma, of uproar, of their families showing these passions.

She questioned who she is as a teacher with her beliefs, and how her power would affect the way she treats every single kid. She has certain thoughts on masks and certain thoughts on every single thing that she thinks about but has to go and serve every kid. She asked the Board to ask these questions of Administration; how many days are you giving to professional development to prepare our teachers with the tools and skills they need to transition our kids into deep critical thinking after these years? What will the focus of that professional development be? She would like to see the focus be on the foundational social and emotional learning that is needed for our kids to come and process. We know social and emotional learning and trauma informed tells you you need that before you can learn.

Joe Garruba, 28 Winchester Dive, Hollis

Spoke of the concept of critical thinking. He asked the Board to do the critical thinking that we are here to teach our children. Look at the censorship, look at the media environment, and tell him if they think this is a rational discussion that is going on there. Do the research, look at the death numbers on the CDC, the numbers are ridiculously low, lower than the flu for the amount of deaths that this causes to children.

Thanked the Board for allowing everyone to speak and thanked everyone who attended and made their voices heard.

The public comment period was closed at 7:24 p.m.

PRINCIPAL AND ATHLETIC REPORTS

Tim Girzone, Principal, Hollis Brookline High School (HBHS), highlighted areas of the report, which was included as part of the agenda packet. There have been recent renovations at the high school; paving around the sides and back of the building to allow for a carpool lane closest to the building and free traffic to flow to the back lot. Both morning and afternoon carpools should see some improvements as a result. Renovations of the roof are being phased in.

Doors reopen for freshman as well as any student new to HB including sophomores or students who were remote last year, on Wednesday September 1st. The first full day of school for grades 9-12 will be Thursday, September 2nd.

Enrollment numbers were included with the report; 854 students projected to start the year.

Principal Girzone spoke to the Athletic Report noting all sports have gotten underway. The first regular season competition will be when the golf team defends its state title on the 26th of August. The first game under the lights on the turf field for soccer will be on Tuesday, August 31st.

For the middle school athletics, the plan is for return to tri-county competition. That process will begin on the first day of school, September 2nd. The first regular season competition will be on the 13th.

HBHS was recently recognized by the NHIAA as receiving the sportsmanship recognition as one of 50 schools in the State that did not receive a game disqualification for any coach or player during the 2020-2021 school year.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock commented on being pleased with a return to some normalcy for athletics. She understands fans will be allowed at the turf field for the first soccer game.

Member Stoll asked if there has been any talk about return to normalcy with performing arts. Principal Girzone stated the current plan is to offer the typical performances throughout the year.

Patrick West, Principal, Hollis Brookline Middle School (HBMS), noted the new tiling in the hallway is complete. The 7th grade orientation will be held on Wednesday, September 1st. Student open house days are August 26th and 27th from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. That is for 7th and 8th grade. The PTSA met and will be at the open house days. They are looking for volunteers.

Enrollment numbers include 15 new students and 3 re-enrollments. As of August 12th, the student population is 379. Schedules are complete for students and staff.

*There being no objection the Board took a five-minute recess at 7:32 p.m.
The Board reconvened at 7:38 p.m.*

DISCUSSION

- Articles of Agreement – establishing a fall meeting date

Vice Chairman Solon addressed the request made for background information noting some of that was covered at the last meeting. Meeting minutes will show the content of the proposed warrant article. This was brought up before the last Annual Meeting. It was requested that we not put it on that meeting for two reasons; time and the risk of confusion of having two warrant articles about the topic and the potential to misunderstand the relationship.

This article comes out of the year-long study that was done by our staff attorney along with the District Clerk to get the Articles of Agreement (AoA) up to date with all of the amendments that have happened over several years. It was discovered that the AoA posted on the website did not include all of the amendments that had taken place.

When that final document came to the Board it was the first time in quite a while that the complete document was reviewed. That review highlighted items that were not accurate for how the COOP district is operating.

The Articles can only be adjusted during the annual meeting or a special meeting. The purpose for this is to make those corrections. The belief of the Board was that we should not do it during the summer when most people are absent, but that scheduling it once school was back in session with sufficient publication in advance, multiple meetings, an information session, a required hearing, and then the meeting, would be appropriate to do

without further putting it off for another year of incorrect adherence as well as the risk of again bringing it up at a meeting where it could cause future confusion.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock commented the concern with bringing it up at the regular March meeting is that the last meeting was 9 hours. It is a complicated topic and although it is mostly cleanup, it requires time to process and discuss. She feels the March meeting is always a long meeting. Handling it with a special meeting would provide additional time for that discussion.

Vice Chairman Solon noted the warrant article itself was drafted by legal counsel. Questions that have been raised about the correctness or the implication of it are hoped not to be an issue because of the source of the amended document. At its last meeting, the Board determined the hearing would occur at the September Board meeting. The goal tonight is to identify the date for the actual meeting.

Drew Mason, District Moderator

Stated his belief Vice Chairman Solon was asking legal counsel whether there is a required time gap between the public hearing and the meeting. Vice Chairman Solon noted he had not received a response. Superintendent Corey stated he would need to follow up.

Asked what he believes to be a safe assumption to allow for a date to be chosen, Mr. Mason stated his belief it would be at least 10 days and may be up to 25.

The Board meets on September 15th. Vice Chairman Solon remarked based on schedules that have previously been discussed, getting it done in the month of September is not feasible. He had the impression the last week of September was not available. Mr. Mason stated the 3rd week is definitely out. The 4th week of September or the 1st week of October are both manageable. He questioned if the Board was considering an outdoor meeting, a Saturday meeting, or an evening meeting.

Superintendent Corey stated there to be no restrictions regarding an indoor meeting or crowd sizes at this time. Mr. Mason remarked a meeting in the big gym with under 100 people is what was done with the Hollis School District annual meeting, and it was okay.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock stated her belief, with the information we have at this time, she would think an indoor meeting could be conducted.

Mr. Mason suggested the 28th, 29th, or 30th of September or the 5, 6th or 7th of October. Superintendent Corey noted the 6th of October would be a regular Hollis School District meeting.

Vice Chairman Solon asked for clarification were the hearing to be held on September 15th, the posted Warrant can be different than what was brought up at the hearing. Mr. Mason clarified as this is not a money article, although not a good idea, you can legally, in his opinion, completely rework the article based on information that comes out of the hearing. Vice Chairman Solon noted the update of the dates has been a topic of mixed review.

- Draft Reopening of School Plan for 2021-2022

Included as part of the agenda packet was a document titled Roadmap to a Safe Return to School 2021-2022. The primary goal is to ensure the continuity of educational opportunities for our students as we continue to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic. All schools in SAU41 will continue onsite instruction for all students on September 2, 2021 (September 1, 2021, for 7th grade and 9th grade orientation). Safely returning all students to the in-person learning environment is a priority for the fall of 2021 as students benefit greatly from this mode of learning.

We're again using our guiding resources; American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), Center for Disease Control (CDC), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Learning Policy Institute (LPI), National Association of School Nurses (NASN), National Council on School Facilities (NCSF), New Hampshire Grades K-12 Back-To-School Guidance, New Hampshire School Nurses Association (NHSNA), and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

Highlighting the various aspects of the document, Superintendent Corey stated although daily symptom monitoring via PowerSchool will no longer be required, 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 stated in both the Hollis and Brookline School Districts he has recommended a mask mandate to open school. That is also his recommendation to the COOP School Board. Should the Board choose to go in a different direction, the Administration will enforce any policies the Board sets forth. The Administration is seeking the authority to make changes to the plan as the data changes. One of the things that allowed us to be successful last year was instead of having to hold a Board meeting every time there was a change in recommendations from the State or different data, the Administration had the authority to make those changes. It is believed that is best for the students. It is often difficult to get a quorum of the Board together on short notice, and we would not want to go multiple days without the flexibility.

Each school will return to pre-COVID dismissal times. 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 Administration continues to report to NH DHHS, and they will still be doing contact tracing and potential quarantines. 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. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug did extensive work before leaving last spring, working with each grade level so that we are anticipating where there may be some concerns or potential gaps in curriculum. That information will be passed on again as we open up the school year. Regular Professional Learning Community (PLC) times will be used to discuss those aspects. The curriculum is designed to spiral through multiple grades.

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; 3-4 Fridays over the course of the year. 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 Multi-Tiered System of Support (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.

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, e.g., ventilation will be turned on three hours before the building is opened and will remain on for 3 hours after the building is closed. Electrostatic sprayers and misters will continue to be utilized daily by the custodial crew as part of the updated district established cleaning protocols.

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, ROCK time at middle school, and CavBlock time at the high school. Each school will implement a developmentally appropriate action plan for addressing the social/emotional needs of their students. Yesterday, as an administrative team, 21 members of the staff participated in a day-log training around social emotional learning, how to use outdoor resources. It was a very thoughtful and helpful program for many to start to look at this through different lenses.

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. Food service will utilize both a cashless and cash purchase model. Shared food items such as items donated by parents for classroom celebrations will be prohibited. Concessions at sporting events will resume where applicable. At the high school, to provide the social distancing in that environment, we will be using the outdoor spaces as we did last year, the cafeteria, and the bleachers in the main gym. 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. The example

provided was volleyball where players on the field will not be masked and coach and players sitting on the bench will be asked to be masked. If you are engaged in the activity, you are unmasked. None of our athletes outside have any reason to be masked so volleyball was really the only one that had to be taken into consideration.

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 public 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. That means if I am the monitor of the Student Council, I could have the option for in-person meeting or remote meeting, and if in-person will take attendance for the purpose of contact tracing. 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.

At this time, the SAU is in good form in regard to bus drivers. As has been publicized, availability of drivers is again a problem across the State. This will most likely result in some changing of athletic times for events.

Member Williams questioned how lunch would be addressed at the middle school. Superintendent Corey stated the belief the lunchroom could be used and meet the social distancing while also utilizing outdoors. If the weather were not accommodating, they would return to using the gymnasium.

Asked if lunches would return to two sessions, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated the schedule was changed/Board approved, COVID hit, and the middle school schedule didn't change other than extending the passing period.

Member Whalen questioned, if choosing to go with masks at the start of the year, what matrix would be used to make a change. Superintendent Corey stated there are presently 2-3 matrix out there circulating that are being discussed in meetings with the Administration and during Superintendent meetings. The one released by the State is about the county. As much as that is helpful, often times the county doesn't reflect Hollis and Brookline. We are trying to figure out a way to do a matrix that would rely more on local data. There is more work to be done on that. It is somewhat difficult as the NH DHHS is not providing the level of guidance or input, they did last year.

Asked, he stated they are providing the positivity rate on their website. Right now we don't have data for the weekends. Asked if the positivity rate is based on county, he responded it is based on the State level.

Member Brown questioned the language around students returning from an absence; what will be the process for receiving medical clearance to return? Superintendent Corey responded when a student is out the nurse is notified. In many cases, the student has a pre-existing history, e.g., seasonal allergies, that is well documented with the nurse. Many of the symptoms that could be COVID could also be seasonal allergies. In that case, last year our nurses were very effective at determining, working with that family, when to go to see the doctor or when to return to school.

Member Brown commented this is going to be one of those areas of as it is written versus the practicality of it may not necessarily be what you want. She commented on experience with a school that required a doctor's note to return a child to school and that makes Mrs. Brown send runny nose Joseph into the 3rd grade classroom because she does not think he is actually sick, but it keeps her from keeping him home because then she would have to take a day off of work to take him to the doctor in order to return him to school. What we really want if the child wakes up in the morning with the sniffles is Mrs. Brown to keep Joe home regardless of whether it turns out to be COVID because we want people to be overly cautious. Then if it looks like it is allergies, we want the child back the next day.

Superintendent Corey stated the way Member Brown described it is the way we would like to see it in practice. We will have to figure out some wording here, but more importantly how we craft our email to families in the alert that will be sent out as we start school.

Member Brown asked if a negative test would be required if the belief were the student might have COVID, which was sort of the protocol we were in last year. She asked for additional clarity. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug spoke of the importance of having the conversation with the school nurse. Not every student returned with a negative COVID test last year. We relied on our nurses to triage the situation with individual families based on the medical history and the documentation we had. This language is essentially the same as last year less the mandatory negative COVID test.

Member Brown commented what you don't want is the nurse's office to have 30 kids lined up to say now I feel better, but I didn't go to the doctor, or I am a senior and I just had Fridayitis because they have that in the fall.

Member Williams noted the language states medical provider or school nurse. It still allows for the school nurse to evaluate a child and say I think you really need to get seen. There still are procedures in place where if a student is out for so many days it automatically prompts what is required to return.

Member Stoll asked about the potential to use outdoor classrooms. Superintendent Corey stated the intent to utilize the outdoor space. They have found that putting a tent out didn't necessarily mean that is where the students went. When we look at the spaces we do have, our teachers developed a really nice routine of mask breaks and when appropriate outside for class. One of the difficulties we have discussed a bit with the Network Administrator is technology. When you go outside the wireless connections are needed. We will look for solutions to that for those teachers who would like to use that element.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug added for the COOP classes, which were all Zoom in the room, you could not Zoom from outside. While you were in session with all students you needed to be inside the room. That is a barrier that will no longer exist.

Member Stoll asked if the Administration would monitor the mask options for student athletes and change that if necessary. Superintendent Corey stated if the Board approves the plan as written, it will provide the Administration the authority to make that change, which would be based on State data, NH DHHS recommendations or the NHIAA. He does not see from everything he is aware of that outside will create that concern. He believes the concern athletically may be what it means for the team if a member contracts COVID. That is the process of working with the coach, the Athletic Department and going through the protocols of ensuring all parents are notified.

Member Brown suggested the whole extra-curricular athletic section is a COOP issue. The language needs to be revised to include the same language that is identified under the mask language if the desire is for the ability to pivot. Otherwise, what you have is an edict that masks will be optional and then we're going to follow the guidelines. If the guidelines are that NHIAA never gives you any guidelines, and that appears to be what they are going to do this year, then you've already said masks will be optional. If you want the ability to change that

we need to revise this to give that authority. You could say masks will be optional at the start of the school year and the Superintendent has the ability to make a change to the mask requirement or an activity based upon local conditions.

Vice Chairman Solon suggested removing the first bullet because we are not really catering to NHIAA. You may use that in reference, but it sounds like you are going to do it internally with whatever information you feel is most appropriate. Member Brown remarked with respect to COVID yes because we always have to follow NHIAA. Chairman Deurloo Babcock commented “will be developed in accordance” doesn’t mean will follow blindly. Vice Chairman Solon suggested the statement could state that NHIAA guidance will be considered. From the standpoint of whether it is masks, quarantine, etc., if you want to have autonomy, he does not believe the current statement conveys that.

Superintendent Corey commented what he heard as a suggestion was adding “Should local conditions change; the district reserves the right to make a change to the mask requirement or an activity based mask requirement.” could be added to the Extra Curricular section. That will be done. Member Brown remarked the other problem we will have is with the change of seasons and where the sports are outdoor sports to where they are indoor. Superintendent Corey responded last year, prior to the winter, the Athletic Director brought forward a proposal of how we would deal with the winter season. He recommended that be the course again this year. Member Brown suggested the additional words “for fall sports” be added because this is the re-opening plan. Then we do winter and then spring. Superintendent Corey was agreeable to that.

Asked if the district has the ability to test students for COVID, Superintendent Corey stated they do in terms of the sense that we could sign up with an agency that would do pool testing. Parents would have to agree to be part of the pool testing. He is uncertain how much bang for the buck there would be with that. He is interviewing a few of the pool testing companies because if you don’t get in before the school year starts you are basically out of the running. He can sign up and basically do absolutely nothing for the whole year. His intent is to conduct the interviews and get us in the queue. As we start to go through the year if there is a service offered that the community and families want to take advantage of, we will be able to.

Asked if the district has the ability to test a specific student in the nurse’s office, Superintendent Corey stated the district does not intent to test in the nurse’s office. The recommendation would be to go to be tested.

Vice Chairman Solon stated the language that states “Should local conditions change, the district reserves the right to make a change to the mask requirement or an activity based mask requirements.” doesn’t give the Administration the authorization. He questioned if the intent is for the Board to provide that authorization. Superintendent Corey noted the motion provided for approval includes the Board authorizing the Superintendent to make changes.

Asked if the statement “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.” is a recommendation or a requirement, Superintendent Corey stated it is not a requirement; however, the district will do its best to strongly encourage it.

Vice Chairman Solon questioned how students and staff would be notified of having been a close contact for a COVID positive individual and was informed it would be the same way as last year, the difference being they would not be placed in quarantine. The contact tracing will be completed, any close contacts will be identified and notified. Often times it was by a phone call from school administration/nurse prior to the district communication.

Vice Chairman Solon questioned what would occur during the quarterly collaboration that is not being done in PLCs (1 hour). Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug explained PLCs will be Friday morning as they have been in years past and those are for the different courses. Last year what was incredibly effective was providing additional dedicated time for more of that broad-based planning to ensure continuity between multiple courses taught by multiple instructors to be certain they are all on the same page.

Moving forward especially in light of all the work that was done in June determining either cohort skill gaps or individual learning needs the quarterly planning will provide two hours dedicated to review of that.

Asked about the reason for assigned seating, she stated it to be for contact tracing.

Asked who could request IEP or 504 meetings to be remote, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated it to be a team decision.

Asked for additional information on the types of additional supports that school counselors will provide, she stated there would be additional check-ins and activities with those students. The most basic example is the 9th grade orientation day has 9th grade students welcome, transfer students are welcome, and the students who were remote all year last year are welcome.

Asked if there is a specific reason why the shared food items are prohibited, and if it is a policy that will carry on, she stated it has sort of been a policy that was attempted to be put in place for years now. Member Brown noted the changes in the handbooks that removed celebratory food items.

Vice Chairman Solon asked about having a separate mask ruling in extra-curricular versus the classroom; perhaps you are thinking about sports specifically, but he does not understand why we would want a different policy for extra-curricular than for other activities going on inside the school. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated the only exception was athletics and that was more based on NHIAA. Vice Chairman Solon commented we're saying we are taking control over that. Is that statement a reflection of current NHIAA ruling or what we want for our policy? Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug noted we opened with masks optional outside and then, based on various cases that came up, we had to switch to masks on at recess (elementary example). We switched back to masks optional outdoors right around the same time that NHIAA, in the spring sports season, deemed that masks were no longer mandated by their authority. It coincided with what we were already doing for outdoor time.

Vice Chairman Solon suggested the revision already discussed, where the wording will reflect back to the Administration, is more valuable than having this kind of a blanket statement.

Vice Chairman Solon requested the language "Facility use by outside organizations will be limited to community-based groups and will require approval by the Superintendent's office." also note the requirement to comply with policy. The language almost sounds like it is an override, and he does not anticipate that being the case. Superintendent Corey responded it is more just because we ran an event in the past doesn't mean we will run it this time. Vice Chairman Solon noted the importance of the policy being referenced so that if people want to understand the nitty gritty of what is and is not allowed, they can refer to the policy. He believes there is the potential for the Superintendent to gain authorization to exceed that, but probably not to be more liberal.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock questioned if there is a reason the district cannot offer remote instruction. Superintendent Corey responded it doesn't exist without the Emergency Order. Asked if he is categorically prohibited from offering remote instruction, he stated he asked the question of legal counsel. It is a balancing act where we were told we had the five days that we've always had for the blizzard bag or remote instruction to reduce snow days. It is still pending who makes the call if we went fully remote. Vice Chairman Solon questioned partially remote/offering a dual mode. Superintendent Corey stated he does not think we would be returning to room in zoom. Asked if he is prohibited from that, Superintendent Corey responded as of right now, yes.

Vice Chairman Solon remarked when it was stated that schools had to have in-person, at that time they authorized that schools would still have the option. He questioned when that went away and was told that went away when the emergency order was lifted in the spring. He asked for clarification if that is because there is a pre-existing requirement that all instruction must be in person. Superintendent Corey stated that to be one of the questions he asked of legal counsel earlier in the day because he is uncertain where the legal piece is coming from.

Asked if the Superintendent has the authority to implement remote without there being an explicit executive order triggering it, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated at this point, no. The district no longer has the authority to quarantine. We no longer have the authority to provide remote instruction. If there were an outbreak, then we would be having different conversations with the Commissioner to request an exception to what is in place.

Member Brown commented it could fall under the policy IGBG, which is homebound instruction, which is usually only for certain circumstances. Probably the request I just don't want to send my child to school I don't feel comfortable so therefore I think the district should provide me a remote option would not satisfy the policy. VLACS is always an option.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock asked and was informed the same number of days as is identified in the contract are being used for professional development.

Asked if there is a focus for professional development this year, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated that was discussed earlier in the day during the retreat. The big opening is all about meeting the students where they are and bringing them forward for mastery learning taking into consideration their different needs and the different methodology of how you meet their needs. After that we move more into a social emotional learning focus and how to look at the needs through that lens. Then there is also the specific two hours of planning for the data they received from the prior year's cohort.

Member VanCoughnett asked if the community would be permitted to use the gym and was told some of our schools do not have the capacity to have lunch in other places so there will be some restrictions on some spaces just based on circumstances. If allowed in, they would have to follow the building mandate.

Member VanCoughnett stated she has listened to the community and read the emails. What she struggles with is going against the recommendation of the Administration as those individuals live it day to day. The one thing that sticks out for her is that we have had other policy that we have had pushback and conversation over and over on if it harms one student. She feels that we have heard a lot of students that have been harmed by the masks and closures. She does not think that any professional development we do will be helpful if the students aren't coming to the building because they are afraid to because of masks or no masks. She feels she has to go with masks optional. We're a long way from where we were last year when we started with a mask mandate. For the students to have to come back in the building with masks on will be harmful to their mental health.

Member Brown stated she is in line with Member VanCoughnett. She is going back on the data. The cohort that we are dealing with in this school is different than the elementary districts. Our students, other than a handful who will turn 12 during the month of September, are all eligible to be vaccinated. The Moderna and Pfizer vaccine both have about a 94-95% efficacy rate. You have about 100% rate of success in making sure that the child does not become severely ill. That is pretty good. Her husband does drug development, and she has posed the question to him of whether he would send kids back without masks. His answer is yes, I would send our children back without masks because they are fully vaccinated. Other kids who aren't vaccinated probably need to show up with masks on for their own safety and probably that of others. She believes you have to look at all the data and if you look at the death rate for the young children it is just not there/not compelling.

She spoke of being upset with how upset and volatile the room seems and that people feel they all need to wear red shirts and come to our meeting and stomp, etc. She thinks they should have had enough faith. Some of the comments at the start of the meeting were indicating that they didn't have any faith in us and that we weren't representative of the community. They really need to sit back and reflect on who is actually on this Board and the data we are actually looking at.

The other statistic or percentage she cannot get past is when you look at suicide rates in young girls; up 50%. She knows from her own experience that it is very difficult to do a meeting with masks on. She cannot imagine trying to instruct teenagers and read the nuances on their face with a mask on their face. She spoke of respecting a parent's choice. Some of our parents will choose not to vaccinate their kids and some will decide it is not safe to send their kids back to school because we are going back mask optional, and these are individual decisions people will have to make. She is very comfortable sending her two kids to the COOP with their vaccines and without masks.

Member Whalen agreed these are tough decisions and also agreed she hates masks. But we're tasked with the job of educating these children. The one thing everyone can agree on is that in-person learning is more effective and certainly better for everyone's mental health. She has heard the students that don't want to come back with masks. She does not know of any student who wants to wear a mask. She has four children who are in different situations, but her youngest is at UNH and she has to wear a mask indoors.

She feels the Board has received so much information and she has read more medical studies than she ever has in her entire life. Information has been received saying wearing masks is the best approach and those that say they are killing these children. It is all information from different doctors. We have also gotten information from doctors in our own community. Those who live in and are well aware of what is happening in our community and are sending their children to our schools feel that masks are important. The reason masks are important is not just that one side wears them but that everyone does. This isn't a perfect plan. She does believe it is the job of the Board to try to provide in-person learning to as many students as we can and keep them as safe as possible. She is not talking about deaths. It is about keeping children healthy and safe. She would hope that we would get to a point where we could change if we do go with a mask mandate.

Three weeks ago she thought the decision for masks optional would be easy as the numbers were going down. When we were wearing masks and people were getting vaccinated, the numbers were going down. The minute we stopped wearing masks and people stopped getting vaccinated they went back up.

She has four children; two got COVID (one in February and another in April). They are still dealing with the side effects of it. Her kids are healthy, they exercise, eat right, don't have any pre-existing conditions. She does not want to see that happen to other people's children. She respects a parent's right to choose. She just feels it is her job, on this Board, to make sure kids stay safe and can be in-person learning. She does not want a scenario where we get into school, have an outbreak, and have to go remote again. That is not good for the student's mental health either. She understands masks are affecting children's mental health, there are a whole lot of other factors affecting their mental health including the climate that has been in the last two meetings. She would prefer to start the year with masks to see how it goes, and if the plan can be changed in September.

Member Williams stated, as is, she does not support the plan. Her personal thoughts are that she feels safe with her kids being without a mask. It is really really hard to represent a community that is so divided. We have heard a mix of testimony. Tonight we heard from some students who were incredible to come out and speak. There are so many students that have stories like that, and she believes we are doing harm if we reopen with the mandate in place. There are some students for whom we cannot meet their needs if masks are required. At this point, given the community and the information we have right now, she believes masks should be optional.

Although she wants the fluidness of the plan and the ease for the Superintendent to be able to make changes, whether this Board goes with opening with mandated masks or optional she has concern about authorizing the change of it. She needs more data points. If we open with masks mandated, at what point and level of infection, etc. would a change come about. Regardless of the direction the Board takes around masks, she would like additional information on what would prompt a change.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock asked for clarification, the desire is for the plan to include language around a matrix being provided for when a change would occur. Member Williams stated that is what she would like to see. Although she completely trusts the judgement of the Superintendent, she would like to understand his thought process if making those changes.

Member Brown stated the Board could walk away tonight not approving the plan. We would need to have another meeting. She would prefer that as she believes there to be enough things that are different about this district versus the elementary districts and there are things in the plan that she believes to be inconsistent. If the Board votes for mandatory masks, she believes the plan has to be completely rewritten to be consistent with that. Right now it is not written with a take on we will be consistent with masks. The decision the Board takes regarding masks will inform the decision on how the rest of the policy should read.

Member Whalen commented to her masking the children in school, if we do that at the start to keep them safe, differs from requirements around extra-curricular activities because they are required to come to school. She feels masks in school help mitigate any spread as much as we can. Fifty percent of kids 12-19 in Hollis and Brookline are vaccinated. We don't know if those are homeschooled, private schooled, etc.

Member Stoll spoke of having been hopeful that we would not be in this position at this time; would not be talking about masks. She agrees there are mental health issues that are real with some students, and it needs to be monitored, but she does not think that is just because of masks. It is because of the unprecedented time and pandemic that we have been living in for the last year and a half. To just blame it on masks is a little shortsighted. She hears the parents who want choice. But what about the families who don't have a choice because they have an immune compromised child or another situation where the child cannot be vaccinated; their choices are limited in terms of their education if we say mask optional when masks would protect those

children who otherwise cannot be protected by the vaccine. They become this vulnerable part of our community and they deserve the same public in-person education as any other student.

She stated her hope local conditions change and we could move to mask optional but does feel starting off the school year wearing masks is the safest choice for our school community.

Vice Chairman Solon remarked it is kind of absurd that we have to make this decision because for the most part he does not believe they are qualified. It is really sad that the system is set up in such a way that it has come down to people that have opinions and are doing their best to decipher things they have never had to understand before. But that is the situation we are in.

He is a very strong believer in personal rights and personal freedom. He believes personal freedoms exist, but they extend only to the point where they start to infringe on someone else's personal freedom. He has the right to take risks for himself but does not necessarily have the right to put another at risk. The interesting thing about the data that has been sent to the Board is that people on both sides of the issue are sending the same data and it is what they are looking at and where their priorities, beliefs and to some degree where their trust lies.

We know that masks primarily act as spit shields. They function to protect others much more than the wearer. Its primary benefit is to protect others from the wearer. To serve that purpose of effective curtailment of spread everybody needs to wear them. They only work, if they are going to work at all, if they are utilized properly. They need to be maintained and handled properly. We have heard reports that does not happen much. He is conflicted because although he thinks the theory is great, he questions whether the impact of wearing masks in our school is fulfilling even partial goal when you weigh that against some of the real risks but also some of the perceived risks.

Vaccinations do not prevent COVID, and they don't prevent the transmission. Just because someone is vaccinated it doesn't take them out of the pool of people who present risks to other members of the public. The data seems to show that they help the vaccinated person.

The question is what is our primary role on the goal, our priority and responsibility. Is it education, health, health of student, health of community, and what kind of health; social emotional learning, mental health? We have often struggled over the decades of saying is it appropriate to put this increasing pressure on the public schools to fulfill society's gaps in caring for the student. Are our teachers and staff really equipped to meet those needs? What should be our response to public direction? If there is a mandatory mask requirement, how do you enforce it? How do you ensure they are used properly, and if not being enforced is there value to it? The reality is when students go outside the masks come off.

One of his concerns is what options are there for students whose parents will not allow them to attend school because of whatever policy we pick. Either way he hears parents who have said they cannot send their kids to school based on that decision. There are obstacles in place to give us the options we may need to fit the needs of our school. What it really boils down to is what do we as individuals and as a Board consider to be acceptable risk. Acceptable risk in terms of the risk that kids get sick, of students being prevented from participating, risk of them being disturbed and hurt by wearing masks.

His inclination right now, based on misgivings, is that although he would support mandatory masking if he believed that it will be done properly and comprehensively simply because he would like to see COVID stopped. In light of the realities of what he is recognizing, why punish people who are so distressed by mask wearing for something that he thinks is almost placebo in content.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock stated agreement Board members are not experts in this. She will lean on the ones she knows. She has heard a lot of comments that we cannot trust things like the CDC or the American Pediatric Association, but their recommendation is universal masking indoors K-12. She will not argue with that. She hates the masks too and is concerned about the students' mental health. She is not certain it is just due to masks. These kids have been thrown into a pandemic, a global pandemic. Millions of people have died across the world. They are scared, they are lonely, they are upset, they hear about fires in Afghanistan and other news, and they are scared. Every single day it comes at them through social media. It is constant information. We did not grow up like this. That is what is driving anxiety and depression. For every kid that the mask makes a mental health issue because they don't want to wear it there are kids who want everyone in them, and they are afraid.

Mental health is something that she is 100% no longer going to waffle with the question of is this the school district's responsibility. It is. It has to be. They are there with us 7-8 hours/day. For every kid who shows up in their mask terrified there is a kid who doesn't want to be in a mask. She does not believe the Board can solve that problem one way or the other. We need an advisory system. We need a program that will give our kids a place to go. We need to start seriously considering that as an option in our district. We need to focus on mental health and social and emotional learning in a way that we have never done before. It is really the only way that they are going to be able to function as human beings.

She stated support for an opening plan that has a mask requirement. She would also support a matrix system that outlines exactly when and if we make a change.

She is concerned that starting the year without masks and having to add them later would be much harder on our students. The reason people are so mad right now is because we have had 2 months without masks. Last year we had masks, we had contact tracing, we had quarantining (no longer have as a tool). We had fewer kids in the building last year and now we have fewer tools. The other tool is vaccination. The fact that we only have 50% of our population vaccinated is a shame. That is your choice, but now you want to not be vaccinated, to not have to wear a mask, but to be in school full time in-person. That is fantastic, but the kids who are scared, they get to go to school, put their mask on, follow the rules, they got their vaccine, and they get to be scared.

- HB Elevates Update – Advertising and Recognition

Superintendent Corey stated the desire to refer the Advertisement and Recognition policy back to the Policy Committee. We are getting requests from HB Elevates to see if the Board would want to consider advertising at some of our fields. Through the work of HB Elevates, we are expecting a donation of computers from Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU). That would be coming back to the Board in September for acceptance. We're looking at between 25-40 laptops that are coming offline at SNHU that would fit very well into our inventory.

Vice Chairman Solon asked HB Elevates to provide some idea of what type of advertising they are proposing, what changes, etc. He has had individual conversations with a member of the Board, but they have not been able to meet as a board to determine that. At this point, the only question he believes to be relevant to this Board is do you want to categorically consider allowing paid advertising because the current policy categorically prohibits it. That was done after much deliberation. It was made in the face of proposed monies for advertising. When that discussion took place there were potential opportunities and the decision at that point (we didn't have a field), was no. He would not want to ask the Policy Committee to propose policy language if the majority opinion of the Board is not to permit it. We do allow recognition, but the policy requires that it be done in a standardized format. If the majority is supportive, he would hold off on asking the Policy Committee to review the policy until input can be received from HB Elevates as to the nature of the potential advertising.

Member VanCoughnett stated she would entertain it. The main reason that the policy was written the way it is was the concern of whether it would fall within community guidelines, but now that the field is behind the school, she does not think the concern is the same.

Vice Chairman Solon questioned if there was any member(s) of the Board who was categorically against. There was no indication of that level of opposition.

DELIBERATIONS

- To see what action the Board will take regarding a fall meeting date regarding the Articles of Agreement

MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO SET THE DATE OF OCTOBER 5, 2021, AT 7:00 PM FOR A MEETING TO ADDRESS PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS

MOTION CARRIED

7-0-0

- To see what action the Board will take regarding the School Opening Plan for 2021-2022

Vice Chairman Solon questioned, if there is a plan having mandatory masks and a very clear trigger point for relaxation, would there be support for that?

Superintendent Corey stated whatever the Board approves is what the Administration will put in place. In terms of a matrix, that is a struggle. He has looked at a number of them. Right now most of the matrix have county data, which is so different than Hollis and Brookline. In some ways it is easy to determine the kind of cases, but it is not always accurate.

Vice Chairman Solon questioned if it is appropriate to be isolating ourselves in that consideration when the majority of people in Hollis and Brookline work outside the area. Superintendent Corey responded if you use the State's matrix our county would be substantial right now. The recommendation from CDC in that case would be masks. The recommendation from NH DHHS is to recommend masks indoors. At the same time, having gone through last year and being in session, there were times when the county was high and for us it was non-existent. A little beyond two weeks ago we were at 0 in Brookline and maybe 1 in Hollis. In a period of 10 days that went from 1-15 in Hollis and 0-7 or 8 in Brookline. Now we seem to once again have plateaued for whatever reason.

He is not naïve to think that come 2:30 or 3:00 p.m. there are not carloads of kids coming out of that back lot whose masks are now on the floor of the car. His goal in his recommendation was trying to get as many school days because he does not know what the fallback is. It is not room in zoom and right now it is not fully remote. If we had a spike that had significant numbers, then we are working with NH DHHS to determine the next step. There may be more time between decisions this year because the decisions won't necessarily be all local.

Member Stoll remarked in terms of do we really look at ourselves in a bubble, we also have kids who are back to regular sports, and they are not just playing in Hollis and Brookline, so they are regularly out in Hillsborough County and beyond, and that is a valid thing to keep in mind in terms of the matrix as well. Member VanCoughnett commented a lot of students work as well.

Vice Chairman Solon questioned if it would be appropriate to have the plan start out with the matrix as we don't know what the situation will be 10 days from now.

Member Williams stated concerns with that approach. Very valid points have been made about the students traveling for sports or work, but what she cares about is what is happening in our schools. There are communities that are using matrix that are specific to cases in their school. Asked if she could propose a matrix within a week's time for consideration, she stated it could be discussed. It needs to be based on the population of the school and identify a threshold. County data alone is not what she would like to see used; what is happening in three towns over is very different from what is happening here.

Member Brown remarked she believes from the comments provided; Vice Chairman Solon would support masks optional as they do not work well, now she is thinking she misunderstood his comments.

Vice Chairman Solon stated what he expressed before is his thought process. We have a certain obligation to move beyond our individual thoughts. He does not know that his thought process and his personal philosophies are what he will use as an absolute guideline. He is listening to his colleagues and what they care about, to the community, and trying to form that into something manageable and definitive that we can give to our Administration despite the fact that he does not feel qualified to do that.

Asked about the matrix used by the Administration last year when making such decisions, Superintendent Corey stated they read everything, looked at what was going on in our schools, anticipated, and did listen to Dr. Chan. It was and is still an unknown. Asked if all of those tools remain available, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated the calls with Dr. Chan are not as frequent. In terms of the potential matrix, looking at our school is really important, but our students are in summer, and our families are traveling. Last year travel was not an option. This year it is. We don't know what that looks like and the impact of that potentially will not be seen until the second week of school. If you look 5.8% positivity rate for this State. For our county it is 6.7%. That is very high. If you look at the numbers, 5 new cases in Hollis today. Are those accurate, are they all reported, we don't know. Those are the questions they would go back and forth and argue and argue with NH DHHS and demand more answers that we didn't necessarily get, but we had to do our due diligence, and at some point just cross your fingers and hope you are doing right by the school community and community-at-large.

There was no perfect matrix because the data was never perfect. It is not perfect now. Tools are stripped from us this year in terms of our ability to mitigate. For right or wrong reasons, she feels everything she knew or went by last year is different. To her, opening this year is ten times more difficult than opening last year. Everybody thought last year was impossible and we made it work. She likes the idea of a matrix but is uncertain of the information that would be in there. We could use county data because this year families are going to work where last year they were not. That is important, but how many of our parents work outside of the home? How many of our students work at Market Basket?

Chairman Deurloo Babcock questioned if the Administration is allowed to ask vaccination status and was told they might have that data if a parent supplied it. We are not recording it, only recording what we are legally required to record.

Member Williams stated that was spoken to this week; you may ask for the information to be volunteered, but you cannot require it to be shared.

Member Williams remarked our staff and students have the best possible mitigation at their fingertips, and if they choose to use it props to them, and if they choose not to also props to them. We have done everything that we can right now. Masks are not worn in the schools the way they should be. We cannot enforce it.

MOTION BY MEMBER WILLIAMS TO ACCEPT THE REOPENING PLAN AS PRESENTED INCORPORATING THE DECISION OF THE BOARD THAT MASKS BE OPTIONAL, AUTHORIZE THE SUPERINTENDENT TO MAKE ADJUSTMENTS TO THE PLAN, AS DEEMED NECESSARY BASED ON LOCAL CONDITIONS, AND REQUIRE BOARD NOTIFICATION OF ANY SUCH CHANGES

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER VANCOUGHNETT

MOTION FAILED

3-4-0

Members Solon, Stoll, Whalen, and Deurloo Babcock voted in opposition

MOTION BY MEMBER STOLL TO ACCEPT THE REOPENING PLAN AS PRESENTED INCORPORATING THE DECISION OF THE BOARD THAT MASKS BE REQUIRED, AUTHORIZE THE SUPERINTENDENT TO MAKE ADJUSTMENTS TO THE PLAN, AS DEEMED NECESSARY BASED ON LOCAL CONDITIONS, AND REQUIRE BOARD NOTIFICATION OF ANY SUCH CHANGES

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS

MOTION FAILED

3-4-0

Members Williams, VanCoughnett, Brown and Solon voted in opposition

Chairman Deurloo Babcock remarked, in the absence of a majority vote, there is no reopening plan.

Member Stoll remarked it sounds like there is a need for a matrix, a concern that students don't know how to wear masks and that we cannot make them wear them appropriately. She does not agree with that. Some things can be done to ensure students are wearing the right kind of mask and they can be taught to wear them correctly and told to put them back up if hanging below their nose, etc.

Member Brown remarked that is not the job of the teachers. Also, you've got to completely re-write the policy in regard to lunch, lockers, any situation where they will be less than 3' apart. If taking this scared approach, then we cannot be mask less while eating. Wearing a mask for 7 hours and taking it off at lunch serves no purpose. Chairman Deurloo Babcock responded except that you chose to sit next to that person at lunch time, and you don't have a choice in the classroom. Member Brown remarked either they are masked up completely all day properly and we're supplying the masks, or they are not worn.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock questioned if another meeting is needed. Vice Chairman Solon stated he does not see the plan as proposed with just a simple on or off of masks satisfying the group. We need more than a split decision. We have to have something we all like. Member Williams commented what makes that so hard is our community. No matter what decision we make, we will make a lot of people unhappy.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug remarked at the same time that is sort of where the community is; flip a coin; 50/50 on vaccinations or not, 50/50 on mask or no mask. At some point we have to decide, put it in place and make it work. If we need to make an adjustment, we will make it based on more information that is available to us whether it be data or guidance from the State. Vice Chairman Solon remarked right now the plan does not adequately define that.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock questioned if there is the need for the Board to meet again with more definition of the plan. Vice Chairman Solon stated his belief the need is for a more sophisticated plan but he is reluctant to ask the Administration, who have done their best job to put something in front of us, to do it. The Board has to do it since it is our decision. The reason he was a swing vote is because enough people have concerns that there is not a clear majority, and he does not want to be the maker of a clear majority where it doesn't exist. This is too important.

Superintendent Corey recommended the Board schedule another meeting with this as the single topic. He thinks when people find out the Board is split there may be a different audience in the room. He believes some made assumptions that because of what Hollis and Brookline did, they didn't need to show up. At that point, he thinks the Board needs to let the Administration know what it would like to be done. The Administration has done its due diligence, we are going on 18 months of due diligence, they have sacrificed many many other things to make this the top priority, and they need to know, in a very short span of time, what the direction is. They are trying to plan for opening days, professional development, and also trying to reduce anxiety. One reason anxiety goes up is when something is unknown. Tonight our students, parents, teachers, and Administration don't have a resolution to start to prepare.

Vice Chairman Solon questioned what would be different in the preparation. Superintendent Corey stated he would leave the meeting knowing what his direction is forward. He does not know that which means none of his staff do. For many of our parents they would start to process with their student whether it was optional or mandatory. We know there are people who are not going to be happy either way.

Member Brown remarked she would agree with that except that the resolution we have given you gives you the authority to move and make changes to the decision at any point in time. These kids need to go back to school understanding that they may go into the school building on Monday masked and the next day unmasked or vice versa. That is the kind of resilience they are going to have to have if we are going to have some sort of a dynamic. Member Williams stated compromise is the only middle ground; both sides realizing it is data driven and if things are bad, we need to put more in place and if it is not, we don't.

Member Brown remarked the parents are more concerned because the kids are not presenting with serious maladies. Both of her kids that got the vaccine got much sicker from the vaccine than the two kids who got COVID. It is a big ask to put on a 12 year old to run a temperature of 103 and throw up 8 times on Monday due to the vaccine, but he did it because he wants to go back to school. There are a lot of families that are making those kinds of decisions. She does not believe the parents who have decided not to vaccinate should be criticized no more than we should those that want to send their kids fully back in N95 masks.

Member Whalen remarked we are at substantial right now, and three people on the Board have decided that even at substantial in our county that is not enough to mandate masks. Is high enough to mandate masks, and if that is the case the thought is they aren't going to work. Is what you are saying is it doesn't matter what it is, we don't want masks it doesn't matter?

Member Brown responded she thinks their vote is being misinterpreted because we were asked to put that masked or unmasked in a sentence with respect to a specific policy that has no matrix. Don't overstate what we did.

Member Whalen reiterated we are at substantial right now. Member Brown stated we are not willing to sign up for substantial for the rest of the year with no idea what becomes not.

Member Williams stated her concern is the county. She works in the county and knows the numbers in the population she is working with, and they are not this community. Every town varies. That is her problem. She likes the idea of it, her problem is that is too far away from us, it is not what is happening here. Could it be

happening here soon, absolutely, but right now when you look at the numbers in Hollis/Brookline against our population it is not really substantial spread. That is not going to help in our factor of what is happening here. For her personally the matrix is important, but she is uncomfortable just blanketly using county substantial spread because she does not believe that is what is happening right here in Hollis/Brookline.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock stated last year we left the decision to our Administrators who looked at the data regularly and they made decisions that kept our kids in the building 95% of the time. She errs on the side of going with their recommendation because they have been the ones looking at this data, they are the ones deciding whether it is county or local. She understands some of the Board wants more specifics, and the Administration has stated that will be provided in September. She trusts the Board will get it. She would like to move forward so that there is some sort of a plan whether that is to approve a re-opening plan or schedule another meeting.

Member VanCoughnett noted should another meeting be scheduled; she will not be available next week. That would take her out of the picture, which she does not like. The matrix is not the issue for her. The issue is she thinks the mask should be optional. If people don't want to send their kids, then they don't send their kids. She trusts the Superintendent to make the call as he did last year. He does not need the plan to say a certain matrix. She feels the community has a bigger issue with masks versus no masks, and she does not think that having another meeting will change her vote on that.

Member Stoll commented if you are saying that you trust the Superintendent, right now he is saying let's go in masked. Member VanCoughnett commented maybe the better choice is she believes the science; she does not believe the data. The data for the county could be totally different. We don't know what the data is because everyone is on vacation. We will not know what the data is until we are in the buildings.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock questioned the will of the Board relative to wording that would be acceptable for a motion to gain support. Member Stoll suggested a motion making masks mandatory and that decision be revisited at the September meeting once there is a better sense of what matrix will be used. Member Williams countered with, or they are optional until.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock stated the desire to hear from Vice Chairman Solon as he was the deciding vote. Vice Chairman Solon responded anyone could be the deciding vote. He was being asked to make this decision essentially independently, and he was not willing to do so. Member Brown commented that is how she feels about putting it on the Administration at this point.

Superintendent Corey noted the timeline; there would be 11 days plus an orientation day so 12 days between tonight when you meet again and when the first child steps in the building. Asked what happens in the absence of a plan, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug remarked her thought would be the one unifying result would be that everyone in the community would be really upset, disappointed, and angry if there is no plan. To the Superintendent's point and Member Williams point about looking for local data, we don't have the data until students are back. The September Board meeting allows 11-12 days of students in the building.

Member Brown asked what data we would have because we cannot test the students, we cannot ask them if they have been vaccinated. What data will we gather once they come back into the building? Superintendent Corey stated there would be the known cases that would be reported to the nurse. Member Brown remarked a good portion of these kids are Asymptomatic so unless you are using that pooling resource and testing them as they come in the door, we are not going to know what our numbers are.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock stated she would change her vote noting the need to open and get our kids in the schools. That is all that has to happen here. She does not agree with it, but she would change her vote because she wants the schools to open. She commented we can sit here and debate for the next two hours, but someone has to give. She does not see the option. She agrees it would be great if we could all come to consensus, but we cannot. We live in this divided time, divided community, someone has to compromise. Someone has to change, and she is going to do it.

MOTION BY MEMBER DEURLOO BABCOCK TO ACCEPT THE REOPENING PLAN AS PRESENTED INCORPORATING THE DECISION OF THE BOARD THAT MASKS BE OPTIONAL, AUTHORIZE THE SUPERINTENDENT TO MAKE ADJUSTMENTS TO THE PLAN, AS DEEMED NECESSARY BASED ON LOCAL CONDITIONS, AND REQUIRE BOARD NOTIFICATION OF ANY SUCH CHANGES
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS
MOTION CARRIED

4-3-0

Members Solon, Stoll and Whalen voted in opposition

- To see what action the Board will take regarding the Business Administrator's recommendation for the Retained Fund Balance

MOTION BY MEMBER WILLIAMS TO RETAIN UP TO THE SUM OF ONE HUNDRED EIGHTY THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED SIXTY DOLLARS (\$180,760) OF SCHOOL FUND BALANCE FROM THE FY21 SCHOOL YEAR AS THE END OF YEAR AVAILABLE FUNDS ALLOW
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER STOLL
MOTION CARRIED

7-0-0

MOTION BY MEMBER WILLIAMS TO TAKE FROM THE TABLE POLICIES JLF, EBBD, AND JLDBA
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER VANCOUGHNETT
MOTION CARRIED

7-0-0

- To see what action the Board will take regarding policy **JLF** – Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect
 - 1st Reading; 5-19-21
 - 2nd Reading; 6-16-21 (as amended)

Given its third reading;

MOTION BY MEMBER WILLIAMS TO AMEND THE TITLE BY ADDING THE WORDS “AND NEGLECT” AND THE FIRST PARAGRAPH BY DELETING THE LAST SENTENCE, ACCEPT THE THIRD READING, AND ADOPT, AS AMENDED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER VANCOUGHNETT
MOTION CARRIED

7-0-0

- To see what action the Board will take regarding policy **EBBD** - Indoor Air Quality
Given its 1st reading;

**MOTION BY MEMBER WILLIAMS TO ACCEPT THE FIRST READING, WAIVE SUBSEQUENT READINGS, AND RE-ADOPT POLICY EBBB - INDOOR AIR QUALITY, AS WRITTEN
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER VANCOUGHNETT**

ON THE QUESTION

Chairman Deurloo Babcock noted the policy is not changing. The Policy Committee was asked to review it. Asked what the basis for the request was, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated there was a request by the union to review the policy to make sure that it met the legal requirements. Asked if there was a specific complaint about the policy, Superintendent Corey stated there was not.

MOTION CARRIED

7-0-0

- To see what action the Board will take regarding policy **JLDBA** – Suicide Prevention
Given its 1st reading;

**MOTION BY MEMBER WILLIAMS TO AMEND THE TITLE BY REPLACING “SUICIDE PREVENTION” WITH “BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT AND INTERVENTION”, ACCEPT THE FIRST READING, WAIVE SUBSEQUENT READINGS, AND ADOPT, AS AMENDED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER STOLL**

ON THE QUESTION

Chairman Deurloo Babcock stated the policy has been mistitled in our policy manuals. It should be Behavior Management and Intervention policy, which is required by law. The Policy Committee is working on a Suicide Prevention policy.

MOTION CARRIED

7-0-0

- To see what action the Board will take regarding Policy **IMG** - Animals in the classroom
Given its 1st reading;

**MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO TABLE POLICY IMG - ANIMALS IN THE CLASSROOM
UNTIL THE NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS**

MOTION CARRIED

7-0-0

REPORT OUT BY PROCESS OBSERVER

Member Williams remarked the Board did great on time, allotted an hour for public comment. Discussion went over on the re-opening plan. We have never gotten through policy so fast. Great comments from the community in attendance and via email.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION

MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON THAT THE BOARD, BY ROLL CALL, GO INTO NON-PUBLIC SESSION PURSUANT TO RSA 91-A:3 II (b) THE HIRING OF ANY PERSON AS A PUBLIC EMPLOYEE AND (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 VANCOUGHNETT

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

Yea: Beth Janine Williams, Kate Stoll, Tom Solon, Holly Deurloo Babcock, Krista Whalen
Elizabeth Brown, Cindy VanCoughnett

7

Nay:

0

MOTION CARRIED

The Board went into non-public session at 10:11 p.m.

The Board came out of non-public session at 10:39 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY MEMBER WILLIAMS TO ADJOURN
SECONDED BY MEMBER SOLON**

MOTION CARRIED

7-0-0

The August 18, 2021, meeting of the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board was adjourned at 10:40 p.m.

Date _____

Signed _____