

**BROOKLINE SCHOOL BOARD  
AUGUST 17, 2021  
MEETING MINUTES**

A regular meeting of the Brookline School Board was conducted on Tuesday, August 17, 2021, at 5:30 p.m. at the Captain Samuel Douglass Academy.

Kenneth Haag, Chairman, presided:

Members of the Board Present: Erin Sarris, Vice Chairman  
Karen Jew, Secretary  
Rebecca Howie  
Alison Marsano (participated electronically)

Members of the Board Absent:

Also in Attendance: Andrew Corey, Superintendent  
Gina Bergskaug, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction  
Daniel Molinari, Principal, Richard Maghakian Memorial School  
Patricia Bouley, Principal, Captain Samuel Douglass Academy

As Member Marsano was participating electronically, in accordance with the Right to Know Law, Chairman Haag requested she state, for the record; where she was, why her attendance in person was not reasonably practical, who, if anyone, was with her, and whether or not she was able to hear the proceedings.

Member Marsano responded she was out of town on vacation, attendance in person was not reasonably practical given her location, she was alone in the room she was in, and could hear the proceedings.

Chairman Haag stated, for the record, those present at the meeting were able to hear Member Marsano and reminded the Board all votes would be taken by Roll Call.

**AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS**

Chairman Haag suggested the agenda be adjusted by moving the discussion item ahead of public input.

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

**CORRESPONDENCE/RESIGNATIONS/NOMINATIONS** - None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Brookline School Board ..... [August 2, 2021](#)

*The following amendments were offered:*

Page 5, Line 4; replace “Milford” with “SAU41” the first time it appears

Page 7, Line 42; delete “Where”

Page 8, Line 7; replace “sounds” with “sound”

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

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER JEW**

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

Yea: Alison Marsano, Rebecca Howie, Karen Jew, Erin Sarris, Kenneth Haag

5

Nay:

0

**MOTION CARRIED**

### **PRINCIPALS' REPORT**

Daniel Molinari, Principal, Richard Maghakian Memorial School (RMMS), highlighted areas from the report, which was included as part of the [agenda](#) packet. Teachers will return to school on August 30<sup>th</sup> and students on September 2<sup>nd</sup>. The virtual open house dates are September 13<sup>th</sup> for the Captain Samuel Douglass Academy (CSDA) and September 14<sup>th</sup> for RMMS.

Staffing needs include 1 Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Paraeducator, 2 Paraeducators, and 1 Case Manager at RMMS and 2 MTSS Paraeducators and 1 Paraeducator at CSDA. The report included an updated staff directory, which details grade level/position changes as well as new staff.

Principal Molinari expressed gratitude to the custodians and office staff for their efforts to prepare the buildings for the coming school year.

Asked, Patricia Bouley, Principal, CSDA, stated at this time, there are no plans for an open house for the 4<sup>th</sup> grade students coming up to CSDA.

Chairman Haag questioned enrollment for kindergarten; specifically if enrollment is anticipated to increase from 80 to the 97 projected by NESDEC. Principal Molinari stated his belief there will be an increase in enrollment prior to the start of the school year. Just this week, 2 additional students have registered. Superintendent Corey remarked kindergarten enrollment numbers are always the most difficult to predict as they are impacted by multiple factors, e.g., birth rate, availability of housing. His belief is enrollment will reach the low 80s.

Chairman Haag spoke of having researched the past ten years' and found NESDEC projections to be remarkably accurate (95-97%).

### **DISCUSSION**

- Opening of School Plan

Included as part of the agenda packet was a document titled Roadmap to a Safe Return to School 2021-2022. The primary goal is for in-person learning. Last year, the SAU had the flexibility to adjust and pivot, when necessary, which resulted in a very solid school year. This roadmap was developed under the same format; it is a framework that allows the administrative officers the ability to pivot and adjust as circumstances dictate.

The New Hampshire Department of Health & Human Services (NH DHHS) is no longer providing the same level of guidance as the State of Emergency has been lifted. They are making some recommendations but pointing to other agencies for guidance.

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 returning from an absence must receive clearance from either a medical provider or the school nurse.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug noted the Board would discuss and vote on the issue of mask wearing. The NH DHHS recommends the use of face masks looking at the numbers in the community. The numbers in Brookline are much higher than was the case at this same time last year. Between that factor and the age of the students relative to the availability of the vaccine, she recommends masks for indoors for the Brookline School District.

Each school will return to pre-COVID dismissal times including Fridays. While there might be a few scheduled Friday afternoon meetings for teachers, Fridays are full days. Elementary students will return to traveling to their specialist classrooms. Students will eat lunch in the cafeteria or outdoors (weather permitting). 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 (definition changed) for a COVID positive individual will be notified but not required to quarantine. Fire and safety drills will resume.

Teachers worked diligently at the end of the year to see where students were in regard to cohorts and individuals. Teachers will be provided with feedback from prior year teachers related to apparent skill gaps or weaknesses. They will work with their grade level teams to develop plans to spiral the content through the curriculum to reinforce the weaknesses. Quarterly collaboration time will be provided on Friday afternoons to ensure appropriate implementation of spiraled curricular content across the grade levels. Those Fridays have not yet been selected.

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 spaces (i.e. library media center, elementary art room). School teams will continue to implement and utilize the MTSS-b intervention process. Google classroom and other online tools will be utilized according to the district established protocols.

All students will have classroom access to a district assigned Chromebook/laptop if they do not have their own. Should the situation change, and the district forced to go to 100% remote, there is the ability for every student to have a device. Students will not carry borrowed devices to and from school.

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 removed last year has been returned to the classrooms.

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

Students at all schools will be provided time for socialization during the school day. This will include recess time and morning meeting times at the elementary schools. Each school will implement a developmentally appropriate action plan for addressing the social/emotional needs of their students. IEP, 504, and parent requested student progress meetings will continue to have the option to be held remotely.

Students will be able to travel through the food service line based on 2019-2020 standard protocols. Cash purchases will be permitted. Shared food items such as items donated by parents for classroom celebrations will be prohibited.

Although not applicable in this district, masks will be optional for student athletes when engaged in a rigorous activity.

Students will be asked to bring their own water bottle. Touchless water bottle filling stations are available.

Facility use by outside organizations will be limited to community-based groups and will require approval by the Superintendent's office.

The district will encourage additional students to ride the bus. However, 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. Weather permitting, 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.

Member Jew asked for clarification, although coming back into the cafeteria for lunches, the desire is for lunches to be held outdoors as much as possible. Principal Bouley responded when they can and have the space at tables. She is working with the PTO as there may be an opportunity for the school to receive some donated picnic tables. If that comes to fruition, it may allow for rotating some classes individually to have lunch outdoors (weather permitting). Member Jew questioned if additional sections would be added for lunch given the size of the cafeteria and was told they will be able to rotate lunches. There will be a shift to rectangular tables to accommodate approximately 4 students per table (assigned seating).

Asked if seating on the buses would be grouped by families, Superintendent Corey remarked the transportation company has indicated their first goal will be by families and to provide for as much social distancing as possible. They will have a system for the windows (weather permitting all windows open, etc.).

Member Jew spoke of being pleased the focus will be on providing extra supports particularly to the students that were out all of last year.

Member Marsano commented the NH DHHS website continues to have the checklist for schools and identification of close contacts that was updated April 20, 2021. She asked if they are no longer following that guidance. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated that guidance is dated. The district is not able to quarantine students. The district continues to complete the contact tracing. The difference is we give that information to NH DHHS and alert families that their child or a teacher has been in close contact with a COVID positive individual. They can choose to self-quarantine, but it won't be a mandated quarantine. One strange scenario would be students who may have had a sleepover and one of the students was COVID positive. In such an instance, NH DHHS would be quarantining that immediate household and the student that slept over.

Asked to clarify why the district had the authority to quarantine last year, but not this year, Superintendent Corey stated the difference to be the Emergency Order that existed last year and has since been lifted. It became overwhelming for NH DHHS when we allowed them to do the contact tracing and quarantine to ensure it was happening to avoid a situation where a group of students weren't notified.

Chairman Haag commented if a family member has tested positive that would require a quarantine. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated the district is not placing that quarantine on them, NH DHHS would be. Chairman Haag asked for confirmation if he tested positive, his children could not attend school. Superintendent Corey stated that to be accurate.

Member Marsano asked, when the district notifies NH DHHS of a positive case, does the district still fill out the form with the 3' of contact, and was told it would. Member Marsano remarked although the district would not be placing anyone in quarantine, it is feasible that NH DHHS would. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug remarked she believes anything is possible. We certainly saw that last year. They are saying no; however, as we have different cases that come up, and depending on the NH DHHS person you speak with, sometimes decisions were made last year that were surprising at times. It is beyond our control. We have to be the communicator as well as NH DHHS. At this time, they are saying that the form just notifies. That form really is to identify if there becomes a cluster.

Member Marsano commented the message we want to get to the community is that the situation could change with a moment's notice.

Member Jew questioned if the absence of an emergency order results in the inability to provide a remote education to anyone in quarantine this year. Superintendent Corey responded that is basically correct. The room in zoom concept is gone, and we are back to our typical year where we are allowed 5 days for snowstorms, etc. If the district chose to make up a snow day utilizing remote learning, we could do that. He believes that to be flexible based on what is occurring in the community. The response from NH DHHS will be based on local data working with the individual school district.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated students would have access to Google Classroom and could follow along with their assignments. If a case where the student was utilizing a district-owned device, we could have that device delivered to their home.

Asked if the district intends to rent tents, ask students to bring towels in, etc., Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated we are not utilizing the tents any longer having found teachers were bringing their classes out and not focusing only on the tent. She looked at her child's class list, and it included a beach towel.

Principal Molinari stated as the school year gets closer, they will do an alert to all parents including updates. Towels will be added to the school supply list.

Vice Chairman Sarris questioned what staff would receive the mental health/first aid training and was told that training has been within the district for some 5 years. Every staff member at the middle and high schools is trained. At the elementary districts, school counselors, psychologist, and other interested teachers were trained. We will continue with that, and always make it available at the professional development days throughout the year. It is very similar to the mandatory annual two-hour suicide prevention training because it is about identifying some risk factors, etc. Staff members, custodians, bus drivers, food service, classroom teachers all have that two-hour training annually. The Brookline School District also has a trainer for that program; have that additional person as the resource within the district.

Chairman Haag questioned if testing is required for COVID. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug responded the guidance received is that every school district can determine whether or not it is mandatory for return to school, but there is no legal basis for that. It is what we are requesting and strongly encouraging but cannot demand. Superintendent Corey remarked the district will work through the nurses again. A parent will call into the school nurse and together they will determine if the student needs to go for a test. The district has the ability to sign up for testing, which would be just randomly done (X number of students/week). It is not believed, at this time, that the SAU will go forward with that. He will put the SAU in the ring because if not doing so before the school year starts, were there to be services they do later on in the year, without being included in the mix, we would not be able to apply for them. Our nurses have a relationship with the students and families, and are aware of students who have seasonal allergies, etc.

Member Jew questioned what is needed for a student to return to school after an absence and was told information beyond notification of an absence would be needed, e.g., before returning to school a conversation with the nurse will need to be had identifying the reason for the absence.

Asked for additional information relative to the potential for some half-day Fridays and the difference between those and in-service days, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated the Friday afternoons were specifically for ensuring all of our second grades (for example) were fully aligned, what teachers were witnessing and what needs to be done to address potential skill gaps. Never before have we been so in sync. It is a goal every year, but without having dedicated 2 hours to go lesson-by-lesson, things just happen, and you get off track a little bit. Why it was so critical last year is students were going in and out of remote or in-person and there was the desire to ensure a student who was quarantined and accessing the remote classroom was receiving lessons that were applicable to them. This year what we would like to do with 3 of those Fridays potentially is a check-in to see where we are at.

During one of the in-service days at the start of the year, a plan will be created for addressing the specific concerns that were identified by the classroom teachers in June and the teachers will need the time to check in and see how the efforts are going. The in-service days vary from year to year; some are SAU wide and others building specific. Those are for the mandatory requirements, e.g., two-hour suicide prevention training, as opposed to collaboration time.

Asked how Wednesdays differ from Fridays, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated we do need to incorporate Professional Learning Community (PLC) time, and that is to look at student data, performance, and do that regular check. It is not as broad; more focused on the minutia. It is very limited time (30 minutes).

## **PUBLIC INPUT**

Mike Baier, 2 Kemp Drive

Third school year in district. They specifically chose Brookline for the location to reside because of all the great things the Town has to offer plus the incredible school district.

He works in pharmaceuticals (cyber security position). Through his employment, he pays close attention to all things that occur worldwide. As an individual he can tell you the demographics of people that are highly susceptible to COVID-19, those who are highly susceptible to elicit substantial side effects, etc. He is a case study of someone who is highly susceptible to have very severe side effects having a severe history of upper respiratory infections. He is the case candidate that should be masked in a HAZMAT suit. He has never once worn a mask during this entire pandemic except to go to his doctor's office or the hospital last year to have surgery. He has never restricted his movements or those of his family. His kids have never been required to wear a mask anywhere they have gone unless the doctor's office.

They chose last year to do homeschooling with the guidance of the school leadership. The guidance and leadership have been fantastic; no questions asked. For a school board to dictate and remove a parent's right to choose what is best for our children is flat wrong and inappropriate. It is not the school district's place to determine what is right for his child outside the four walls of this school. The School Board has every right to dictate what happens on school property, but he will withdraw his kids from the district and the school if masks are forced on them.

When you consider all of the other news that is out there both for and against masks, from a truly withdrawn outsiders perspective, if you patch all of the information together, children are the least likely demographic to not only illicit symptoms of COVID but have severe symptoms. They are the least likely demographic to be hospitalized or die. There is very little if any difference in terms of infectious rates or fatality rates between common influenza and COVID-19. It is a fact that the testing procedures that are done, including PCR, are proven to be incorrect, invalid, and do not show appropriate numbers. Even the CDC has recognized this by withdrawing the emergency mandate for PCR testing at the national level.

Right now there is no way to test to distinguish between the initial COVID virus and the Delta variant. With the spread of COVID-19, including information with breakthrough infections, and all of this other stuff that has come out, it is proven that regardless of whether you are vaccinated or not you can and will carry COVID, you can and will pass it on to other people.

If masks are so effective, why right before the pandemic happened, did surgical mask boxes include a warning label stating that masks are not protective against COVID virus in general? What we are doing with masks is inappropriate for how masks were created and what they are scientifically proven to be effective for. Unless the mask is perfectly secure across your face, there is no way to prevent air from getting into the mask and really stop the air that you are breathing out from escaping. What masks are for is to prevent an infected person from potentially breathing large droplets out of their mouths and noses that a mask will capture. Even surgical masks and N95 masks do not stop the spread of aspirated viruses going through the pores and the manufactured weave of the fabric.

Making our kids wear masks to and from school and all day at school is just not substantiated by any science. All of the scientists that are trying to say otherwise are being silenced by the media and made to look like they don't know what they are doing. He urged the Board not to force masks on his kids.

Jim Kelly, 2 Mead Drive

Stated his understanding that determining a roadmap for safely conducting and populating schools with several hundred children must continue to be a challenge even 18 months into this pandemic.

One comparison he offered is how his employer has handled the situation; his company is one of the largest employers in the State with over 5,000 employees spread across several facilities. They have been in essential mode only this entire time. Only the personnel that absolutely need to be in the office to do their jobs should be there. The net result is less than half the workforce is in the office on a given workday. Folks coming in the office have become accustomed to temperature screening, mask usage, except in one's own office, and social distancing. Seating has been modified in the cafeteria to only allow 1 person per table. On July 12<sup>th</sup> when the numbers seemed to be trending in the right direction, the company removed the temperature screenings and mask mandate for those employees who attested to having been vaccinated. By August 4<sup>th</sup>, the company reinstated the mask mandate for all citing the increased cases in the Delta variant. As one might imagine the response in the office was not at all positive. However, people complied in the interest of maintaining a paycheck.

One might wonder why the company would risk an unpopular stance with employees that have had the opportunity to be vaccinated. Could it be because the company cares about its people or is it because they need the workforce to remain healthy to continue executing our projects for the short and long term? This would have certainly been debated at the water cooler when congregating was possible.

Coming back to our situation in the school, we appear to be headed for an in-person only experience this year. We are anxious to get our kids caught up academically and many two-income families need the daycare the school provides. However, this seems to be a bold stance even at the higher grade levels where students have had the opportunity to be vaccinated. The fact that we are reducing mitigations for students, especially for those who have not yet had the opportunity to be vaccinated is difficult to comprehend. We should not only be considering the risks to the children but also to vulnerable family members and the community-at-large.

Do we really believe that we can successfully navigate the upcoming year in a situation that continues to evolve? Without remote, what options are available to those kids that get sick or exposed? Is there an established threshold or plan for going back to remote if there are too many cases experienced? Without many mitigations, it seems the least we could do to start this year is a mask mandate for this grade level. He understands some are more willing to roll the dice, but that is not fair to the rest who want or need to be safer. The mask policy could be reviewed again once vaccines have been made available to this age group. Vaccinations would offer at least some reasonable hope of protection for those interested and bring us all closer to a level risk position.

Lisa Scalia, 12 Powers Lane

Has 5 children; 3 have graduated, 1 entering 6<sup>th</sup> grade, and 1 entering 11<sup>th</sup> grade. She believes in science, masks, vaccines, etc. Her older son is vaccinated, and she intends to send him to school. He will continue to wear a mask. Her 6<sup>th</sup> grade student was remote last year until the spring. He had anxiety, but it was a good experience for the few weeks. When things were good, she was intending to send him this year, but she is now having some serious second thoughts partly due to the level of anxiety he has and partly because she thinks things are not going as well as they had been, and he is too young to receive a vaccine. She would support a mask mandate but is uncertain if her child will be in attendance. She asked the Board to give the other parents like her having children under 12 who don't feel comfortable sending them back in-person, to consider if there is an interim option, whether a multi-grade class through VLACS but with some person from the school supporting it, etc. She asked that be considered for the parents like her who are very nervous about it. She and



her husband had COVID in January and were not that sick, but she continues to be nervous about it. She really wants to be able to send her younger child back to school, but she could not forgive herself if she sent him back and he ended up one of the kids who got really sick.

Tracy Perry, 4 Muscatanipus Road

Read into the record: “Dear Brookline School Board, my husband and I write this as concerned parents of two children attending RMMS again in person this fall. We urge you to vote to reinstate the health & safety measures of the 2020-2021 school year along with adding pool testing to the protocol. To date, Londonderry and Grantham School Districts have agreed to this program. Several other schools in our area including Amherst and Manchester are considering the option.

It is difficult to find ourselves at the start of another school year debating COVID safety protocols. Children under 12 years old are ineligible to receive a vaccine simply because of their age. We cannot forget that there are approximately 50 million children under 12 in the U.S. who are vulnerable to COVID. Taking a closer look at New Hampshire and particularly a deeper dive into the Town of Brookline; New Hampshire is now listed at a substantial transmission level state and there are 1,284 children in Brookline under the age of 18 who are at risk of contracting COVID.

We are at a 112% increase in new cases of COVID in just 1 week. Following the mandates of masking, social distancing and increased hygiene, our children stayed healthier than many anticipated. This year our administrators, teachers, and staff will be vaccinated, which is a huge relief. But the highly transmissible Delta variant compounded with a vaccination rate that fails to reach community immunity put our children at risk. Unless we band together again this year to rely on the many policies and procedures from last year that kept our children healthy in addition to adding pool testing, we risk seeing an outbreak among the children.

Children are at risk of getting sick from COVID (she works in life sciences) not only by getting physically sick but losing important time to be children; to learn, to make friends, and to live somewhat normal lives. Please let us rely on the strength of our community’s commitment to providing the highest educational, social emotional and psychological experiences for our children. We can push past COVID fatigue together.”

Amy Tate, 6 Muscatanipus Road

Feels last year in a confusing scary crisis the Board did an amazing job keeping our children safe. We went into the summer with very low rates where our children were allowed to relax a little bit, but numbers are increasing. We are now taking our small huddles of children and merging them into large school systems again. She likes seeing them back in school. It is healthy for kids to get back in school, but she believes masks, while it is still unknown, are important. She understands and appreciates those who say masks are not 100%. We all know masks are not 100%, the same as vaccines are not 100%. But it is all of those little bits of percentages that makes it stronger for us to eventually fight this and hopefully send our kids to school with no masks and everyone is healthy and happy again. We need to play our part. Masks are not a big deal.

She drives a school bus for the school system. Every single child she has had on her bus has had no issue wearing a mask. She does not understand why so many adults complain about it. She supports mask mandates. She appreciates so many parents don’t want their children masked. She understands for health reasons there are some children who cannot wear masks and she would like to see some variance for allowing some kids to have flexibility, but overall it is just our small little part that helps protect our community. Even though the rates are not high for children getting sick, they can still bring it home to their parents and others in our community.

Rebecca Scalia, 12 Powers Lane

Urged the Board to think about what is going on right now; cases are higher year over date than they were with the reopening of schools last year. She understands remote is not being offered, but a lot of parents are struggling with the decision of whether to send their kids back. Some kids cannot come back because of health issues. She urged the Board to give the parents the piece of mind that their kids will be kept safe. The protocols are not perfect, and you will not please everyone, but the masks are one way we can hopefully mitigate the spread in schools. She saw the kids last year, and they did great. They were not in their masks all day; went outdoors a lot. She urged the Board to consider keeping the protocols in place.

Tom Revetria, 63 North Mason Road

Just moved here from MA and was looking forward to his son going to and enjoying the school. He received a tour of the school and, back then, there was talk of the likelihood masks would be optional. It seems it will be more of the same as last year. Last year his son attended a private school where masks were required. At first, we were scared and understood. Every time he dropped his son off at school, he had a bad feeling in his heart that he was going to have to wear that mask for 8 hours. It just doesn't feel right. A few times last year when coming back from school he broke down in tears because he hated the mask requirement, staying 6' apart, etc.

He heard a speaker ask what the issue is with masks. He printed from the CDC website what the issues are with regard to masks. They came out with a report called "The Psychological Burden of Prolonged PPE Use on Healthcare Workers During Long Shifts". This report was meant for EMTs and hospital workers that have to wear masks for many hours at a time. For children it is worse; while they are wearing a mask, they have restricted oxygen going into their brains during the developing years of their life. This is when their brains are growing, brain cells are reproducing; they will need this oxygen. The masks are proven to cut your oxygen down by about 20%.

What the report says is that frequent side effects of wearing your mask for a long time are headaches, increased pressure inside the skull, nervous system changes (e.g., increased pain threshold, reduction in cognition – altered judgement, decreased situational awareness, difficulty coordinating sensory or cognitive, abilities and motor activity, decreased visual acuity, widespread activation of the sympathetic nervous system that can oppose the direct effects of CO2 on the heart and blood vessels), increased breathing frequency, increased "work of breathing", which is result of breathing through a filter medium, cardiovascular effects (e.g., diminished cardiac contractility, vasodilation of peripheral blood vessels), and reduced tolerance to lighter workloads. There are bad side effects to mask wearing.

Dr. Fauci who has been our advisor, had his emails leaked and he himself said the masks are not really effective at blocking the virus. Masks do not prevent the spread of the virus. All we are asking for is the option. As an immigrant who came from a country that was very close to socialist, he cannot believe that the United States of America, where freedom flourished, has so many people applauding mandates. Mandates are dictatorships. Medical tyranny is also a tyranny, and when you tell someone that they are sick until proven healthy, this is ridiculous. It is unAmerican. We have to preserve our freedoms. When we tell people we are going to use a mandate that is a dictatorship. That is you don't have a choice or if there is a choice the choice is terrible.

He requested the Board side on the side of America, on the side of freedom and let people make their choices. Reported by NPR 7 days ago they did a study on the Delta variant, which everybody says is scarier. It says the Delta variant causes children to be hospitalized at a rate that is less than 2%. The rate of fatality is between .00 to .03. That is right around the same rate as the flu.

This has gone too far. If you think a bit more broadly, we are all being duped. Worldwide this is happening. He read today that New Zealand locked down their whole country because they had 1 COVID case.

Chairman Haag requested the discussion be kept to the school.

Mr. Revetria stated it is relevant because it is happening everywhere. He requested the Board use its heart and think; if wanting to give mandates or choices, side on freedom or on dictatorships.

Rosemary Baier, 2 Kemp Drive

She is a concerned parent. She did remote learning for her two children last year because they were really intimidated about the restrictions put in place. Her daughter is a very creative individual and she felt it would limit her creativity. When they first moved here from the Midwest she was dealing with anxiety and had difficulty breathing. Her concern with kids wearing masks is that it prohibits their ability to be able to breathe. She personally has felt the intimidating gazes from others when trying to exercise her freedoms. In order to appease others and fit in, she has at times, with her children when running errands, worn masks. However, for her specifically it has caused increased anxiety, she has had trouble breathing, has had headaches having worn it for more than a few hours, and she does not want that for her children.

She has seen her daughter when dealing with anxiety, what that has done to her. It is almost like having them wear the masks is just another thing she has to try and work through in order for her not to deal with anxiety. She was trying to encourage her son to speak. He was specifically telling her he doesn't like wearing the masks because it is hard for him to breathe in them. Her reason for keeping her kids home was different than a lot of other parents. She feels a lot of parents feel a sense of security with the masks and that is why they want their children to wear it. We know it isn't foolproof. The vaccinations are not foolproof. There are many parents looking at homeschool programs that are starting to branch here into the State. That is something she is keeping on the back burner if masks are required.

She requested the Board think about not only the physical wellbeing of our children but also their mental wellbeing. She is concerned with how this will affect them down the road. People say it is not a big deal, just do it for other people but it does take some of your sense of identify away when you have to keep yourself covered. We've lived with influenza for so many years so to us it is normal, but this is a virus that isn't going away.

A lot of parents are fearful, and she understands the position the Board is in. You cannot make everyone happy. For those parents who feel a mask is necessary that is okay, but don't force our kids to wear masks. One of the reasons they moved to the State from Illinois was because of the freedoms that New Hampshire residents have. To some extent that was taken away last year. She requested the Board reconsider and look at all of the facts.

She is a former police officer who had HAZMAT training and can tell you they didn't do HAZMAT training with these little masks.

Melinda Albanna, 76 Averill Road

Requested masks be optional. We are 18 months into the pandemic and the data continues to show that children are very unlikely to get seriously ill or die from COVID. Can they catch it, yes. Will they die, not likely. Still less likely than a fully vaccinated adult. The data on the CDC website has not changed since the first reopening plan was put out that made masks optional. She has asked, on three separate occasions, for information on what the Board is hoping to happen for this to end. When do we take the masks off our kids? If you can't answer the basic question of why we need this mandate and what needs to happen to end it, you shouldn't be making this mandate at all. It should be left to the parents to decide. Most of our children have had a maskless summer and the sky didn't fall. There is no reason to mask them again. The data that shows that they do anything is flimsy at best and our experts are quoted as hoping they won't do harm. There have been no studies. She knows for a fact it is causing harm or she would not be before the Board.

Others will say that children need to be masked to protect others. The vulnerable will still be vulnerable 6 months from now. They will be vulnerable 3 years from now. COVID isn't going away. Are we to subject our kids to this forever? Of the 28,000 children that died last year, 335 died from COVID, 4,074 died in car accidents, 1,853 died from cancer, 995 died of drowning. Are we going to stop driving or swimming?

Shayna Burgher, 37 Oak Hill Road

Sent the Board an email. She works in Mascenic Regional School District and was comfortable with their decision of no masks until they are absolutely needed and looking at absolute numbers. She commented she has not heard discussion of the numbers here. In the Mascenic district there are 1,000 teachers, staff, children. If they have 10 cases, then they put the masks on. She is unaware of the numbers in Hollis and Brookline. She has 4 kids in the district and is delighted with the care that her children have had in the district. Our teachers did an amazing job last year. Her district was partly hybrid. She questioned why the district is not looking at very specific numbers within the school settings.

Beth Williams, 3 Nissitissit Road

Thanked the Board for its work. She works in urgent care as a provider. Throughout the pandemic she has been working with NH DHHS in many roles, e.g., in nursing homes, contact tracing, testing initiatives, and most recently supporting the vaccine initiatives, and serves on the Brookline ambulance. She has seen a lot of different faces of this.

The CDC says mask all of our kids, NH DHHS has said pretty clearly recently that we can probably safely open without mandating masks, but we should consider it if numbers rise. Which one is right and which one is wrong is a lot to weigh. She thinks they are both right and that it is important to look at why their guidance is different. The CDC is a huge entity serving the entire country, and things are very different in different parts of our country, and NH DHHS is looking at the data here.

She has learned a great deal working with the State Epidemiologist and attending his meetings. She spoke of the importance for Board members to attend those meetings. They use live data from New Hampshire to make their guidance. There has been a lot of criticism in the last weeks; CDC is horrible, and NH DHHS is horrible, but they serve different roles and use different data.

Her belief is opening school with a blanket mandate is wrong. If voting for that and mandating masks, she would like to know what the end game is; is it if we have no cases in Brookline next week what about two weeks or a month? Are you going to put this all on our Superintendent; is it going to be his decision? She does

not believe that to be fair to him or our community. We have oscillated so far apart as a community it scares her. There is less and less respect for different people's opinions and needs. As a public school we have to find middle ground. What she sees as middle ground is very much what the previous speaker spoke to. If there are a very low number of cases no mask mandate, but they are completely optional and supported for different student needs. As numbers climb it is a huge encouragement to wear masks, and if getting a bit higher it becomes a mandate. Were they to go higher still, that is when we pivot back to remote. That is one of the only ways we can be transparent and have a plan. You can't just say no masks or mask everyone. What is your plan, what is your angle? That is what she wants to see is more of the plan for that.

Stopping a respiratory virus is like nailing jello to a tree. It is not possible. We just have to do what we can to protect ourselves. There are various levels of mitigation and that should be looked at, but to mandate it without plans she cannot support. She requested the Board consider a more transparent plan, sliding scale that allows the Superintendent to have guidance and flexibility and transparency with our community.

Alissa Rasmussen, 1 Winterberry Road

Thanked the Board commenting the community is incredibly lucky to have them all working for them. The fact that they kept the students in class all last year was amazing and appreciated. Believes one of the reasons we did so is because we wore masks. One of the reasons she is for masks is very selfish; we've gotten our lives back and she does not want to see them go away again. Both of her children are very involved in sports as well as school. The virus spreads incredibly fast and by the time that we note a number here she would imagine it would theoretically be too late. At the end of the day, she is sending her kids either way. She hopes we don't have to go back to quarantining, canceling sports, unable to do our jobs, etc.

Colleen Micavich, 29 Iron Works Lane

Spoke of the choice factor. In all other instances in her life, it has been your child/your choice. The problem with choice is that your choice impacts my child. When she puts the mask on, according to some data, she is protecting herself somewhat but is also protecting those around her. Her concern is that she will send her children masked and other students won't be masked. Her children will be protecting the other students, but her children would not be protected. When talking about a 2% number even if that is what that is, that is a high number of kids in hospitals. Our hospitals won't be able to handle that number. We really need to think it is not just as simple as my child/my choice. We all impact each other; we are a community.

Chairman Haag thanked those in attendance for providing their feedback as well as the 45 or so residents who emailed him over the past few weeks in regard to this topic.

## **DELIBERATIONS**

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

Member Jew spoke of her appreciation of the discussion around pivot points by members of the public as well as the Superintendent commenting we should have in the back of our minds that this will not be forever. She suggested additional clarity be provided regarding what those events/pivot points should be down the road.

Superintendent Corey stated the Board and Administration agree on that. The plan that was in place during the summer was mask optional and that was because we had to file a plan for the summer to receive our Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding. We had to file a plan to reopen school. During the summer months, our numbers were basically at zero in the two communities. We had a smaller

population in school and had ample space for social distancing, limited staff (no congestion of hallways), no concerns with ventilation as windows were able to be opened. He has seen the Mascenic plan and one that was put out by the State. There are probably 10-12 out there currently. He participates in a weekly call where those plans are being looked at. It is trying to put numbers on something that is very difficult. We went from 0-9 and 2 or 3 to 15 positive cases in our two communities in a quick 7-10 days.

One of the issues for him has been all students who will take transportation are required to wear masks. He is not opposed, should the numbers go down in the summer, to going to mask optional. He believes we should start the year and see what is happening in the various counties across the State (Superintendents have asked to have the numbers differentiated by town more on a regular basis). Some of that information can be found on WMUR, but the numbers aren't being updated over the weekend. He personally would love to see the district move to mask optional when we get to that point. He believes by the time we get to the Board's September meeting the Administration will have a matrix. It is not that he is opposed to a matrix, he simply believes it needs to be more specific about cases in schools. Ten cases in a school doesn't sound like much, but if that is over multiple grades and multiple locations that is a concern.

One of his big worries is we don't know, as school districts, about our ability to pivot to remote. That was able to be done last year because of the Emergency Order that was in place. This year, the district has to contact the NH DHHS and work with them. He does not have the authority he had last year to be able to pivot quickly. That also worries him because when dealing with NH DHHS and cases did spike, the response time was longer. You can go from 2-10, 10-15 very quickly. The Administration is trying to do as much as possible to return to a normal in-school environment with the students going to the specialists and other changes to make it much more like the typical school day for the students.

Superintendent Corey spoke of having reached out on several occasions to local pediatricians and they are all supporting mask mandates right now. If you go to any doctor office, you have to have a mask. Having three children of his own, he looks to the pediatrician for their expertise and over time has grown to trust the pediatricians and their recommendations. Pretty much across Hollis and Brookline the pediatricians have contacted him and advised him to stay in masks until we have further information on the Delta variant.

Superintendent Corey stated he does not want to be in masks for the entire year. He does not think it is great for the social emotional wellbeing of our students, but he has also experienced kids having COVID, and it is not pretty. For some kids it is a headache and a runny nose, but for others it is a very high fever/concerning element. That is based on the individual. He has no issue with the Board requiring him to put something together regarding a matrix of when masks come off, but the recommendation he received for starting with masks was by the CDC, which he agrees is a global organization. Dr. Benjamin Chan, State Epidemiologist, recommended that as well. The State is not making any guidance this year; putting it all on local people. All of the local pediatricians he has talked to have stated we should start with masks. Those three components are what got us through last year; when many schools couldn't have school, we were in, and we maintained our cases low. He cannot say if masks were or were not the factor, but can say we had a lot less sickness overall in our buildings with mask wearing; normal stomach bugs, etc.

Chairman Haag noted NH DHHS is recommending masks inside in cases of substantial spread in counties. We happen to be in a county of substantial spread. He spoke of the weekly calls with NH DHHS, noting while they have not taken a full stance and allowed for local control, the tone has shifted. We would all prefer not to be in masks, and he can appreciate that perspective.

A lot of times we refer to death only, and that concerns him because the long COVID has also had a significant impact on the entire population, and we are still not talking about that enough. There is a site that has healthcare claims that shows on 1.9 million healthcare claims, between 20-30% of people with COVID have

experienced long COVID, which is beyond 30 days with high blood pressure, difficulty breathing, pain, fatigue, etc. He is concerned that we forget about the other side effects and the societal impacts we will have there.

He remarked, for him personally, all of the decisions are made for the kids; their health and safety. Having a child go through that whether it is 30 days or however long it is concerns him for their long-term health and wellbeing. We're at 650,000 deaths. That is not the same as the flu, and he has to say that out loud. This is a new novel virus. That is just a fact. He would like to see some kind of plan that gets us out of masks this year. To him the flash point is around when there is an option for children to have a true choice with the availability of a vaccine for this age group.

Member Jew commented, we have vaccine, ventilation, masks, social distancing and hand washing as all mitigation strategies. The main piece of that is the vaccines. We make decisions for 578 students; 573 of them will not be eligible for that main piece of mitigation. She cannot support being rid of any of the other mitigation strategies while so many of our students will be vulnerable without having the choice of a vaccine.

Vice Chairman Sarris remarked she fully appreciates every bit of input the Board has received. Regardless of everyone's opinion on this, everyone here wants what is best for our students. She is taking it all in in that spirit. She knows these are terrible decisions to have to make. When thinking of looking at these trigger numbers she agrees we can't just say we will start with a mandate and see what happens. We need to have a goal of being unmasked. She questioned what the number is that would require a pivot into remote. That is where we need to start when we talk about this. Is it a community transmission trigger, inside the school trigger, etc. That is the first thing we all want to avoid. How quickly do we move from we have 10 cases to now we all have to be remote?

Chairman Haag stated fully remote is not an option. Vice Chairman Sarris responded then the question is what happens in the school when NH DHHS determines there is an outbreak.

Superintendent Corey stated the Administration would contact NH DHHS and inform them of our numbers. They will provide us with their guidance. He believes they still have the ability, as they did in the past, to make recommendations to him. He simply does not have the authority, at this point, to simply make the call on his own.

Member Marsano questioned if there is a set number that triggers NH DHHS to say that there is an outbreak. Superintendent Corey stated he does not know their exact number but is certain they have that based on what they did with the nursing homes last year. They would identify certain facilities as having an outbreak and then the community would be notified, it has gone away when it reaches a certain threshold. Member Marsano commented within the SAU our biggest incident was isolated to a sports team last year. Was that considered an outbreak for us? Superintendent Corey stated that was considered a cluster (not an outbreak).

Member Marsano commented when looking at the history of last year with our policies and mitigation measures, we managed to restrict any outbreak at all.

Superintendent Corey responded for the most part he would say we didn't have any transmission in school. Most of our cases were community based. The majority of the mitigation factors that were in place remain in place for the coming school year. Lunch procedures, bathroom procedures, etc. remain the same. He believes the district is well prepared; however, he cannot know how the virus will react.

Chairman Haag remarked if you look at the schools that have opened already, granted their transmission has been higher (substantial), the science is the Delta variant is almost 4 times as transmissible as the previous one.

We are seeing that. There are schools getting shut down and kids going to hospitals. If we don't do this, how do we get ahead of that to avoid seeing that same thing happen to us?

That is a what if game and he understands that, but without the option of remote, he does not know that in good conscience he could say we will roll the dice and hope for the best. Our duty is to put the students first and their health and wellbeing trumps the other pieces for him. To him the turning point is when there is a vaccine available for 12 and under.

Member Jew remarked students in quarantine without the option of remote is not serving them.

Member Marsano remarked while the vaccine is a turning point to some degree, it is optional for families. That gives us some change. She spoke of families traveling over the summer and the students coming together having been in different locations. She believes masking should be required for at least the first few weeks or months to see how things roll out. The remote option is concerning and whether we will have the ability we had last year to flex and move.

Chairman Haag commented last year we, as a community, accepted with open arms the idea of masking for the most part. The numbers were far lower than they are now. Nothing has changed for the students in K-6. The numbers are higher, they are unvaccinated. To him, we should follow the same playbook. There is no variable here yet.

Member Howie stated agreement with the remarks of Member Jew; there are a few mitigation strategies. Nothing is perfect. The vaccine is not perfect. Masks aren't perfect. But all of these mitigation factors together made last year successful. Yes, there were cases, but not spread in school. No one wants to wear a mask. Her older son is vaccinated and doesn't want to wear a mask, but he will. It is a difficult decision, but until the elementary students have the option to be vaccinated, she believes the masks are part of the strategy that made us successful last year.

Member Marsano began to speak but was interrupted by a member of the audience speaking out without being recognized.

The unidentified speaker stated the death rates that were quoted at 650,000 are not right. The real death rate is about 6% of that.

Chairman Haag stated the Board would continue its discussion noting the interruption was inappropriate. Public comment was taken, and at this point in the agenda the Board was engaged in its discussion of the item. The unidentified speaker ignored the attempt by the Chairman to regain order and continued to provide his opinion. He stated it was not the position of the Board to mandate something on his kids.

Chairman Haag clarified it is their responsibility as the elected members of the School Board. The unidentified speaker continued to interrupt repeatedly.



Vice Chairman Sarris stated she believes it important to be able to define what the specific guidelines are. Are we talking about moving from substantial transmission to moderate transmission? It would be ideal if we could get those numbers as specific as we can to our community. If we look at that in the district and determine that right now, we are on the rise (cases are up over the past 14 days by 112%), when it is on the downside and we feel as though we are moving towards moderate transmission, the Board can come together at any time and make that determination. It is really important that we have that exit strategy in place before making any decision.

Chairman Haag stated agreement. It is just that we don't have that yet. We have had medical professionals advise mask use until we have that. To him that is the action, and this needs to be a topic to engage in at every Board meeting and to ensure we have an understood plan to share with the community.

Vice Chairman Sarris commented the position she is in is not for herself. She fully recognizes that she is a representative of the community. She has received 50<sup>+</sup> communications. This is a democracy. She is making her decision based on what she feels her community wants. We have heard from a large number of the community.

Chairman Haag remarked from the emails that were received, there were 39 people in favor of masks and 5 that were against it.

Member Marsano remarked in terms of speaking from that point, she has no kids in the Brookline school system any longer. She cares for the health, safety, and education of all of the students. At the onset of this pandemic, we determined we would follow the recommendations of NH DHHS, the science, and the recommendation and guidance of those more knowledgeable than us. That is what she is sticking to. She understands we represent the populous and taking that into consideration is equally important. She understands where the concerns come about. She also understands coming from the field of the work she does, the importance of social emotional wellbeing of our children. She understands the anxiety around mask wearing and about coming back to school. She also knows the best thing we can do for our children is to get them back to school, in masks if we need to.

Although difficult for them, she knows our teachers and administrators will be there to support the students through this.

Chairman Haag questioned the pool testing. Superintendent Corey stated information would be sent to families and a parent could opt into the child being pool tested. It would occur a few days a week to different groups. He is uncertain if there would be a high participation rate.

Chairman Haag commented so far, an obvious action here is developing the strategy for removal of masks. We don't have remote learning as an opportunity. Is VLACS run by the State? Is it an option for those that want to go that route for enrollment? Superintendent Corey stated that is absolutely the option. We have used VLACS with students in all different grade levels and had success with that. If assistance is needed with that the district office can be contacted.

Chairman Haag spoke of the mask mandates and the ability in the past to address specific needs for students on IEPs, etc. Superintendent Corey stated if a student has a specific condition and are on IEP or 504 plan, that team convenes and makes options. We have had students using those options pre-COVID and will have that option post COVID.

Vice Chairman Sarris asked if masks were optional and there was a classroom where there are students for whom their parents are requiring them to wear a mask and others who chose not to, what does that look like? Is that where there is a communication to parents that this is the responsibility of the child to do that no matter what their age or is the teacher going to be expected to impose the will of the family?

Superintendent Corey stated he cannot imagine asking a teacher to police that and try to deal with math, science, English, and history. One of the things we see with any age group is kids want to fit in. If a teacher is expected to stop a class that takes away from the primary purpose for which we are there. In terms of what other districts are doing more will be known shortly. He can say that Nashua has gone to fully masked, Bedford is mask optional, others are putting together a matrix. He has looked at those. They are a little concerning to him because in some regards right now NH DHHS and CDC both say we are substantial transmission and should be wearing masks. He would not want to create a matrix that violates the people that he goes to for the scientific knowledge.

Vice Chairman Sarris stated her belief a big part of what we experienced and how we got through the school year last year was less even about that everyone was wearing masks; the key that we determined is that we had consistency based on our following of NH DHHS recommendations. It is really tricky to buck their recommendations right now and create a grey area for ourselves because we don't know when the outlying situation is going to arise if we start in a certain way.

Create consistency from the beginning of the year to figure out that target and hopefully get there really quickly because we wore the masks. Then we can take them off. She would much rather that than start without, something happens a week later, and we are in a situation that is now out of our control.

Chairman Haag remarked there is the minimal, moderate or substantial spread matrix NH DHHS has. Perhaps that is something we use as our point of reference. He questioned if the Board was supportive of that or if it is vaccine related or there are other aspects for consideration.

Vice Chairman Sarris stated the vaccine will be really difficult to have straight forward data on. Chairman Haag remarked he was referring more to a release date plus X number of days to allow for adoption. After that it is optional. Or do we go to a scale of the NH DHHS matrix. He questioned the will of the Board.

Member Jew remarked she was initially getting comfortable with the idea of masks optional based on what we had over the summer. She was preparing for that with her own family. With the new guidance and numbers she is going with the NH DHHS recommendations. Chairman Haag stated the one drawback is that the data is county data.

Superintendent Corey noted, should the Board wish to view a matrix, there would be 15 days between the start of school and the Board's next meeting. As part of the motion for the re-opening plan, the Board could authorize him to make changes if things got substantially better in that time period. Right now we seem to be trending in the wrong direction. College move-ins are starting, and we will have parents leaving the State to move their children into school. There will be more transferring potential. We still have a few weeks of vacation for the end of the summer, etc. There is still the potential for things to spike. If you look at the State, most of the colleges are requiring masks for students who are vaccinated. St. As was a 93% vaccination rate but were still doing masks.

All of these institutions, from CDC, NH DHHS, State of New Hampshire, colleges, and now your school districts are all trending towards masks.

Chairman Haag commented he works at a company that was referenced earlier that went full mandate. He has seen that in the industry as well with several of his friends and suppliers. Superintendent Corey remarked he totally agrees with the concept of determining when masks come off, but that doesn't have to be decided tonight. He does not think there is anyone on the Board or in the Administration that wants to go through another school year with masks.

Vice Chairman Sarris stated she would be comfortable, should prior to the start of the school year the county were to move from substantial to moderate, reconvening the Board and having that conversation. Chairman Haag stated his opinion the Board should look at this issue every month and not do too many out of cycle meetings and yoyo on this issue too much. If it is a every month discussion/four-week decision until we get this understood.

Vice Chairman Sarris clarified the plan would be to have a discussion at the September meeting around the current data and at what point we determine the masks can come off.

Chairman Haag remarked with every week there will be data points for other entities that are requiring and not requiring masks. There will be best practices that come about as a result.

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

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER JEW**

#### ON THE QUESTION

Chairman Haag remarked, based on the feedback, he personally thinks the Board needs to have these transparent meetings and gain feedback versus having it left to the Superintendent. There was a lot of passion on both sides of this issue, and we owe the community the transparency of what is being discussed. Vice Chairman Sarris stated agreement commenting the spirit of that is that Superintendent Corey wants to relieve us of some of that, but it is really important that we maintain the conversation with the community as we make decisions.

Superintendent Corey stated his concern, and why that language is in there, is that the Board may decide tonight, things could change, and if unable to obtain a quorum of the Board to meet, he would not have the authority to make a change that the Board would likely agree with.

Chairman Haag asked for examples of the decisions that would come about. Superintendent Corey noted last year we went from no masks outdoors to masks outdoors because NH DHHS changed their quarantine piece. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug noted at the COOP level the district switched from masks during athletics to no masks in athletics.

Member Marsano asked if the second highlighted bullet could be amended to read, the district reserves the right to make a change to the mask requirement or an activity based mask requirement consistent with NH DHHS recommendations?

Superintendent Corey stated his concern would be that it would limit the district to whatever NH DHHS says and right now there are members of the community who don't agree with their current position.

Member Jew remarked if the motion remains as stated, it provides the Superintendent and the Board flexibility. We can still meet and discuss it at every meeting. It doesn't preclude us from being able to change the Board's position and rescind the authority. We can do that at any time. She was fine with the motion as stated.

Chairman Haag asked for clarification if the mask mandate is for all areas or indoors. Superintendent Corey stated students would definitely be taking masks off outdoors.

Member Marsano suggested the first bulleted item under this section of the reopening plan could say intermittent changes between meetings could be made by the Superintendent to be discussed at the next meeting.

Superintendent Corey noted that works. Chairman Haag stated the Board has the authority at every meeting without having to state that. Noted was that the present motion would provide for that flexibility.

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

Yea: Alison Marsano, Rebecca Howie, Karen Jew, Erin Sarris, Kenneth Haag

5

Nay:

0

**MOTION CARRIED**

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

**MOTION BY MEMBER HOWIE TO RETAIN THE SUM OF UP TO ONE HUNDRED TWENTY NINE THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$129,500) OF SCHOOL FUND BALANCE FROM THE FY21 SCHOOL YEAR AS THE END OF YEAR AVAILABLE FUNDS ALLOW  
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER JEW**

ON THE QUESTION

Superintendent Corey noted the recommendation of the Business Administrator that the Board approve a retained fund balance of \$129,500. This is the maximum amount and is the same number that has appeared in previous Revenue/Expense reports. This number will still allow \$200,000+ dollars to be returned to the taxpayer in the form of a reduced tax rate. Expenditures from the Retained Fund Balance require the Board to conduct a public hearing to obtain public input. The funds, if not used, lapse to the general fund at year end. A vote of the Board to retain an amount is required on a yearly basis. An agreement was reached, should the Board continue to fund this into the future, the Contingency Fund would no longer be funded.

In accordance with the language in Warrant Article 9, approved by the voters, the Board is authorized to "retain any unused portion of the year-end unassigned general funds, from the preceding fiscal year in subsequent fiscal years, provided that the amount of year-end unassigned general funds does not exceed, in any fiscal year, 2.0 percent of the current fiscal year's net assessment under RSA 198:5."

Member Marsano asked for clarification on whether the contingency fund allocation would be included. Superintendent Corey stated it is not. When this year's warrant articles are put forth, there will not be a request to fund a contingency fund.

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

Yea: Alison Marsano, Rebecca Howie, Karen Jew, Erin Sarris, Kenneth Haag  
5  
Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION BY MEMBER HOWIE TO ADJOURN  
SECONDED BY MEMBER JEW**

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

Yea: Alison Marsano, Rebecca Howie, Karen Jew, Erin Sarris, Kenneth Haag  
5  
Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

*The August 17, 2021, meeting of the Brookline School Board was adjourned at 7:42 p.m.*

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