



**Haverhill School Committee  
Remote Special Meeting Minutes of December 29, 2020**

Mayor Fiorentini read the following Opening Statement: Due to the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic, Governor Baker issued an Emergency Order temporarily suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A sec. 20. Public bodies otherwise governed by the OML are temporarily relieved from the requirement that meetings be held in public places, open and physically accessible to the public, so long as measures are taken to ensure public access to the bodies' deliberations "through adequate, alternative means."

**Roll Call - Pledge of Allegiance.**

Mayor Fiorentini, Chairperson called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm and requested a roll call of the members.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais	Present	Ms. Sullivan	Present
Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello	Present	Attorney Magliocchetti	Present
Mr. Wood	Absent	Attorney Rosa, Vice Chair	Present
Mayor Fiorentini, Chair	Present		

Dr. Margaret Marotta, Superintendent of Schools, and Mr. Michael Pfifferling, Assistant Superintendent were also present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Mayor Fiorentini asked that Superintendent Marotta make her presentation prior to public comment. There were no objections.

Dr. Marotta shared some data about pool testing and the possible return to in-person learning. She gave a brief definition on pool testing which means a number of specimens (from people = students) are taken and one test is run.

The Superintendent began the review of the "Forging a Path Forward" PowerPoint Presentation: <https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:f4ad537c-cdc5-454b-9042-8106480b7035>. She introduced Dipti Kuppali and Chanrith Kivi from Concentric regarding classroom pooling and the pilot program. Ms. Kuppali provided a report on specific details of classroom pooling (students will be self-testing) with input from Mr. Siv (pages 12-19 of PowerPoint presentation).

Attorney Magliocchetti asked if students could be tested prior to the resuming of classes. Ms. Kuppali responded that it was an option and could be decided by the district.

In response to Mrs. Sapienza Donais' question on parental permission, Ms. Kuppali replied there were permission forms. She further noted, based on feedback that it was a positive experience for students.

Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello questioned how long it would take to receive the test results. Ms. Kuppali answered approximately 36 hours. Mr. Kivi provided more detail on the actual (molecular) testing and its accuracy. Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello was concerned with any symptoms after the testing i.e., runny nose.

In a pause in the presentation, Mrs. Jami Dion, Supervisor of Counseling and Guidance provided a brief report on the negative mental health impact of the pandemic, which has resulted in elevated risk levels among students.

Dr. Marotta noted that this was an option to be considered by the district and was worth discussion. Mayor Fiorentini was in favor of this proposal.

In response to students who could not self-test, Dr. Marotta replied that it would be worked out with the nursing staff. She commented that it was another tool and not a panacea.

### **Public Comment.**

Mr. Anthony Parolisi, 169 Summer Street, Haverhill MA (HEA President) thanked Ms. Sullivan for reconsidering her vote on returning students to the classroom resulting in tonight's meeting; Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello and Mrs. Sapienza Donais for their response to HEA's letter along with solidarity with the HEA on the School Committee no confidence vote; Mayor Fiorentini and Attorney Rosa for agreement to tour the schools and speak with staff and lastly, the School Committee for amending its agenda to include public comment and lastly, thanked Dr. Marotta and her team for their leadership at this difficult time. He commented that surveillance testing should be implemented when significantly lower community spread numbers are realized in Haverhill. HEA President Parolisi criticized the recent Committee decision on returning students to the classroom and 2/3 of the HEA membership signing a no-confidence letter (School Committee). Mr. Parolisi noted the only way to earn back trust was to develop a plan (clear metrics) and advised moving all students to remote learning until January 19, 2021. He recommended making a better decision this evening.

Mrs. Lauren Sanguedolce, Mathematics Teacher/HEA Treasurer recommended remote learning until further notice. She indicated that the majority of HPS staff did not feel safe in the school buildings and noted that remote learning can be successful. Ms. Sanguedolce advised working together since we cannot control the virus, but can control our response.

Ms. Kelly Phillips, mother of a Cohort C student thanked the School Committee for decision to return this cohort to in-person learning and for teachers for their support with her child's learning; she related her son did not do well with remote learning. She was concerned with the remarks that Cohort C spreads the illness more easily and felt it was disheartening and discriminatory.

Ms. Deb Schultz, parent and HPS occupational therapist (primarily Cohort C) strongly suggested the implementation of the remote learning model until positivity rates were in a steady decline. She commented on concern and anxiety with in-person learning surrounding her medically fragile students.

Mrs. Trish Shaw expressed deepest concern for colleagues, students and family about combined classrooms' rotating models. She recommended following the valued JCRT's opinions and asked the School Committee to consider the remote learning model.

Ms. Christen St. Pierre Molina, a COVID positive staff member related that she transmitted COVID to her family (husband and sons) and strongly pleaded with the community to implement full remote learning.

Ms. Alysha Bartlett, elementary speech therapist outlined her school day and the concern with bringing the virus home to her 10-month son and diabetic husband.

Ms. Lauren Papalardo, Moody Preschool School Language Pathologist expressed the high-risk nature of her position and did not feel valued as a staff member.

Ms. Rosalinda Mendez, a parent chose the remote learning model due to safety concerns. She stated that parents of immune compromised students were extremely vigilant and protective of their children. Ms. Mendez supported the remote learning model.

Dr. Emily Boulger, a teacher, commented on her observations at the recent COVID testing site with people traveling out of state and non-mask wearing citizens in the community. She recounted the lack of communication and the enforcement of protocols between schools; and recommended the remote learning until there are safer conditions.

Mr. Dale Leone, 21 Race Street, Haverhill MA, HHS Senior recommended on-line mental health resources and publicizing resources on Google Classroom.

Mayor Fiorentini provided comments from Mary Connelly, Public Health Nurse who offered that 11% of cases were students, furthermore, her child is struggling with remote learning.

The Mayor would be publicizing Facebook comments over the weekend.

Mayor Fiorentini read a note from Jessica Wright, a Greenleaf Academy Reading teacher who supported in-person learning.

Public Comment concluded.

### **Returning Students to the Classroom – School Committee Members.**

Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello supported remote learning due to the high numbers of COVID cases.

In response to the questions on the company, Dr. Marotta responded they were an established company.

Dr. Marotta lost connection to the meeting and further questions were postponed.

Attorney Magliocchetti emphasized working together to provide meaningful solutions. He related that suggesting student safety and staff welfare was not being considered by the School Committee (Mr. Parolisi's letter) exhibited the weakest form of leadership; true leadership brought people together and promoted collegiality.

Attorney Magliocchetti cited the community rate vs. the school district staff rate (1.5% and 1.9%) and found there was no study that provided correlation between in-person learning and community spread. Additionally, School Committee member Magliocchetti was concerned with the other component of

mental health impact on students, i.e., increases in mental health visits ages 5-11 (increased by 24%) and ages 12-17 (increased by 31%). He asked for Jami Dion to comment on the mental health statistics.

Ms. Dion reported that the absence of routine, structure, predictability resulted in dysregulation for students and these statistics emphasized this occurrence.

Attorney Magliocchetti asked if there would be enough staff to resume the hybrid model on 1/4/21. Dr. Marotta highlighted the uncertainty during this pandemic and the physical ability to resume hybrid learning was questionable due to a number of factors.

Attorney Magliocchetti related that based on this information, the date should be adjusted from 1/04/21 and indicate there would be no alteration or adjustment to the date in the interim.

Mayor Fiorentini stated that procedurally prior to a vote on date change, there needed to be a motion for reconsideration.

In response to Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello's question on staff travel during the holidays, Dr. Marotta answered there were a policy for quarantine and notification to Human Resources.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais noted that the expressions of fear among staff members about the transmission of COVID was heart wrenching and emphasized that "everyone matters". She reiterated the need for a safe environment. Mrs. Sapienza Donais explained there was reuse of N95 masks (2) for a month and gowns.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais wanted to make a motion for reconsideration. Mayor Fiorentini responded that she could not make the motion since she was not on the prevailing side.

Attorney Magliocchetti made a motion for reconsideration. Mrs. Sapienza Donais seconded the motion.

Mayor Fiorentini allowed for further discussion prior to the vote on reconsideration.

Mrs. Katie Vozeolas, Director of Health and Nursing Services responded that the nurses were reusing the KN95 masks in the fall and the teachers had been requested to follow the same procedure. She also clarified the use of gowns and instituting the purchase of disposable gowns. Ms. Vozeolas noted that adjustments were being made to adjust to staff preferences regarding PPE.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais asked that this information be communicated to staff.

Ms. Gabriela Vargas, Student Advisory Council Representative thanked all the teachers and noted the difficulties during the pandemic. She commented that students just wanted to be heard.

In response to Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello's question on status of PPE, Mrs. Vozeolas responded that adjustments were being made with these supplies and there was on-going education for staff.

Dr. Marotta stated there was plenty of PPE and had to be responsible in our use. She related there was a movement to more disposable gowns.





