



**Haverhill Public Schools - School Committee Hybrid
Regular Meeting Minutes of August 12, 2021**

Roll Call - Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Fiorentini, Chairperson called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm and requested a roll call of the members:

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

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Mayor Fiorentini read an act relative to extending certain COVID-19 measures adopted during the state of emergency was signed by Governor Baker and allows for remote meetings and hearings by public bodies through April 1, 2022. This meeting will be available via live streaming over HCTV and WHAV. The full meeting recording will be posted on the HCTV website.

Communications/Reports ~ Public Comment.

The following individuals were present either remotely or in-person to offer public comment:

Andrea Watson, 455 Washington Street #3, Haverhill, MA spoke regarding COVID, mask mandates and safety procedures.

Kathy Kaczor, 46 Crowell Street, Haverhill, MA was disappointed that there was no remote learning option this year. She indicated that her son participated in the CTE program and was getting a remote machine. Ms. Kaczor had privacy concerns over the device policy along with the social media policy and asked for a review.

Dr. Marotta offered that IT could attend the next meeting to provide a report. She commented that the device policy had been revised and the additionally the policy handbook was being reviewed by legal counsel.

Attorney Rosa indicated that there had been policy revision.

Tim Briggs, 30 Hoyt Road, Haverhill MA urged the Committee to support the resolution of the Secretaries Contract along with urging cooperation among all parties regarding COVID issues.

Laura Campbell, 810 Amesbury Road, Haverhill, MA 01830 noted a petition had been started to support parental choice in mask wearing and offered supportive statements for the optional mask viewpoint.

Thomas Grannemann, 51 Leroy Avenue, Haverhill, MA 01830 spoke about the importance of vaccinations.

Gianna Chavez, 43 Nichols Street, Haverhill, MA urged that remote learning option should be offered for children.

Kara Sotirakopoulos, 483 East Broadway, Haverhill, MA was uncomfortable with masks (distributed a packet to the Committee) requested that there be no mask mandate and noted that her second grader, an emerging reader was uncomfortable about wearing masks for 7 hours. She commented on the sacrifices of children such as physical and mental harm. Ms. Sotirakopoulos urged parental choice and closed that her son had never seen a smile inside his school. Finally, she asked the committee not to create a

discriminatory environment.

Rocio M Collado & Felimar Collado, recommended personal choice for mask wearing and vaccinations.

Kerri Lupi, 11 Elaine Marie Drive, Haverhill, MA 01830 recommended easing restrictions on masks and supported parental choice;

Mickie Taylor, 1 Williams Street, Haverhill, MA. A parent of special education needs child and was disappointed that there is no remote learning option since some children could not safely return to the classroom.

Amanda McCann, 56 Lincoln Avenue, Haverhill, MA parent of speech delayed children commented on the learning difficulty (understanding) when wearing a mask. She referenced a Swedish Study emphasizing social distancing instead of mask wearing.

Nicole Oliva, Groveland Street, Haverhill, MA spoke against mask mandates because of social and physical issues and urged parental choice.

Barbara Greenwood, 426 Chadwick Road, Haverhill, MA 01830 spoke against mask mandates and supported parental choice.

Kelly McNulty spoke on behalf of Nichole Maroun, against mask mandates and urged parental rights.

Noemi Custodia-Lora, 40 Locke Street, Haverhill, MA spoke on behalf of the Latino Coalition and Diversity Committee urged diversity in the HPS and was encouraged by the creation of the Diversity position. She expressed concerns with the Diversity position posting and noted that the priority was cultural change within the school district.

Student Advisory Council ~ Max Popoloski.

Mr. Popoloski offered the following comments:

- Students will be returning on Tuesday, August 31, 2021;
- Freshman Orientation will be held on August 18, 2021 in the HHS Courtyard with two representatives at each table for each area allowing for one-to-one time with a student;
- Today, the Student Council representatives a Diversifying the Curriculum presentation was shared with the administrative team.

Superintendent Comments/Reports.

Dr. Marotta noted the following items that would be addressed in regards to the pandemic:

- COVID-19 DESE Guidance ~ Mask wearing: Students, Staff, Vaccinated, Unvaccinated, Sports.
- COVID-19 Pool Testing 2021-2022.
- COVID-19 Test & Stay Programs.

Mayor Fiorentini announced a “Block Party” Vaccination Clinic tomorrow at Tilton Upper from noon to 3:00 pm.

Superintendent Marotta reported that the Remote Learning Academy was successful learning experience last year, however, the School Committee had not had the opportunity to debate this matter since the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has eliminated the option and implemented that all students attend school in-person for school year 2021-2022. She provided the following opportunities for virtual charter academies such as Greenfield and TECCA, along with home schooling and for students with medically documentation there is a home hospital tutoring program. Dr. Marotta stated that unfortunately there was no remote learning option for the upcoming school year.

Dr. Marotta noted that conversations needed to be held locally since there were no mandates from the state and indicated there was a new program called “test and stay” to reduce the number of

quarantines. She acknowledged both School Physician John Maddox, M.D. and Director of Health and Nursing Katie Vozeolas, BSN RN NCSN as the medical team.

The Superintendent provided a presentation entitled “Reopening Schools During Pandemic” which included the following information:

Active Staff COVID Status
Close Contact, Positive Cases, Grand Total
0 – 0 – 0
Active Student COVID Status
Close Contact, Positive Cases, Grand Total
15 – 8 - 23
City of Haverhill – Average Incidence Rate (last 14 days) Graphs from 05.08.21 to present showing late July and early August a trend showing a slight increase

A graph detailing age groups, population, fully vaccinated individuals, full vaccinated individuals per capita

Age Group	Population	Fully Vaccinated	Fully Vaccinated per Capita
12-15 years	3,045	1,208	40%
16-19 years	2,995	1,618	54%
20-29 years	8,620	4,084	47%
30-49 years	14,508	10,274	59%
65-74 years	6,147	4,980	81%
75+years	3,966	2,798	71%
Total	65,939	35,273	53%

Dr. Marotta commented that vaccine clinics would be held to achieve higher number of vaccinated individuals.

The Superintendent referenced DESE/DPH COVID-19 Guidance for Districts and Schools Fall 2021 <https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/fall-2021-covid19-guide/fall-2021-covid19-guide.pdf>. She highlighted the following:

- Grades kindergarten through grade 6 students wear masks indoors unless there is a medical condition or behavioral needs and masks are not necessary outdoors and can be removed while eating indoors;
- Unvaccinated staff in all grades, unvaccinated students in grades 7 and above and unvaccinated visitors wear masks indoors in alignment with statewide advisory on masking;
- DESE & DPH recommend that schools allow vaccinated students to remain unmasked;
- Staff and students must wear masks while in school health offices;
- Masks are required on buses (state law).

The Superintendent stated that DESE and DPH would soon release a new version of the “Protocols for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios” document and as part of this guidance districts in the statewide testing program or using approved diagnostic tests will be able to implement a new “test and stay” protocol in lieu of requiring asymptomatic close contacts to quarantine. She explained that under the test and stay, asymptomatic close contacts will have the option to remain in school and be tested daily with BinaxNOW for at least five (5) days and added vaccinated staff and students are exempt from quarantine.

Dr. Marotta offered the following questions to be addressed:

- Student masking under age 12 (under grade 6 would be masked)
- Student masking over age 12
- Teacher masking
- Masks and Sports – indoors vs. outdoors

- COVID Surveillance Testing (pooled testing – staff, students, athletes)
- “Test & Stay” Policies
- Visitor Policy

Dr. Maddox asked about mask wearing in City Hall and was informed by Mayor Fiorentini that masks were not required at this time but there may soon be a reversal of this procedure. He related opinions were very strong regarding the mask issue and the decision was complicated and there was imperfect information. Dr. Maddox reported that Haverhill was one of the 20 top cities that had been impacted by COVID especially in the black and brown communities and cited the lower than anticipated vaccination rates in Haverhill. School Physician Maddox reported that the CDC, DPH and American Academy of Pediatrics recommended universal masking in K-12 schools for unvaccinated people. School Physician Maddox noted the issue was whether vaccinated individuals be allowed to be unmasked, DESE says yes however, CDC and American Academy of Pediatrics recommend masks for all individuals.

In regards to Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello’s question on staff masking, Dr. Marotta responded that vaccinated staff could remain unmasked in the school building when there are no students in attendance.

Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello asked about infection rates during the summer programs. Ms. Vozeolas responded that there were very minimal incidents in the summer programs and low absence rates for other illnesses and there was no evidence of illnesses as a result of wearing a mask. She also cited the low incidence of flu last year and credited mitigation methods such as, socially distancing, masking and disinfecting measures.

Ms. Vozeolas commented on the mandated flu vaccine last year along with the removal of the requirement in December. She announced that there will be no flu vaccine mandate this year. Ms. Vozeolas noted the concern about flu and the possible increase in cases due to the fact that there is a return to a more normal environment.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais asked about the role of social distancing in the classroom.

Superintendent Marotta responded that the desk will be placed three-feet apart in the classroom.

Attorney Rosa stated that increasing the vaccination rate was an important measure. He related the #1 goal was to keep schools open this year. Attorney Rosa struggled with the mask mandate (to keep schools open) and parental choice.

Dr. Maddox noted that mask removal was an incentive to receive the vaccine. He commented on the unknown aspect with the removal of the remote learning option.

Attorney Rosa asked Dr. Maddox regarding quarantine since there would be transmissions.

School Physician Maddox related that quarantine rule was at the discretion of DPH.

Ms. Connolly from Haverhill DPH offered the quarantine rules which states:

- Vaccinated staff who is a close contact does not need to quarantine;
- The test and stay program (if adopted) allows for close contact student(s) would be tested for five (5) days and if asymptomatic, the student(s) could remain in school.

Mayor Fiorentini suggested mandatory vaccinations for staff.

Dr. Maddox stated that the vaccine was safe, however, because of its status it would be difficult to

parentl consent) for five (5) days and if asymptomatic, the student(s) could remain in school.

Dr. Maddox responded that this was a reasonable policy.

Ms. Sullivan seconded the motion.

Mayor Fiorentini, Chair requested a roll call vote:

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

6 members voted in the affirmative Motion passes

0 members voted in the negative

0 members abstained

0 members absent

At the suggestion of Mayor Fiorentini, Mr. Wood made a motion to begin discussions with unions over mandatory vaccinations (if not vaccinated required to be tested each week). Mrs. Sapienza Donais seconded the motion. Mayor Fiorentini, Chair requested a roll call vote:

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

6 members voted in the affirmative Motion passes

0 members voted in the negative

0 members abstained

0 members absent

Attorney Rosa asked about fans at sporting events and if Mr. O'Brien had provided a recommendation.

Dr. Marotta responded that there was no recommendation.

Attorney Rosa made a motion that fans at outdoor sporting events did not need to wear a mask. Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello seconded the motion. Mayor Fiorentini, Chair requested a roll call vote:

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

6 members voted in the affirmative Motion passes

0 members voted in the negative

0 members abstained

0 members absent

Dr. Marotta recommended that visitors be allowed for school tours and socially distant school events, but not to have visitors in the classroom.

A motion was made by Mr. Wood to allow visitors to schools with the provision that they wear masks. Mrs. Sapienza Donais seconded the motion.

Dr. Maddox cited the CDC guidance on visitors which stated that visitors should be limited in areas of moderate or high transmission.

Mr. Wood amended his motion to include a review of community transmission rates by the second meeting in September. Mayor Fiorentini, Chair requested a roll call vote:

Mrs. Sapienza Donais	Yes	Attorney Rosa	Yes
Ms. Sullivan	Yes	Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello	Yes

Mr. Wood, Vice Chair	Yes	Mayor Fiorentini, Chair	Yes
6 members voted in the affirmative		Motion passes	
0 members voted in the negative			
0 members abstained			
0 members absent			

Dr. Marotta offered that at the next meeting there should be a discussion of field trips.

Moody Preschool Expansion Calendars.

Superintendent Marotta noted that the start date for Moody preschool students has been adjusted to September 9, 2021; screenings would be held on September 8, 2021.

Assistant Pfifferling reported that MSBA representatives visited Moody School and indicated that the program would be brought to the MSBA October Board Meeting.

Hiring Update.

Human Resources Coordinator Sandra McArthur presented a report (416 staff were onboarded this summer) and personally thanked the summer coordinators, Meg Fitzgerald, Lindsey Chastney, Courtney Dickson, Angela McVey, Denise Johnson, Michelle Jondle, Andrea Carella, Kayla Pellot and Hugh Morrison. Mrs. McArthur commented on the teacher shortage and recruitment efforts (99.5% licensed teachers in our district) and credited principals with finding highly qualified staff members. She noted that the district was utilizing recruitment options including SchoolSpring, Indeed, Better Teams, and this year advertising locally on WHAV and holding our own job fairs (8.17.21). Mrs. McArthur emphasized the work being accomplished regarding recruitment of a diverse workforce (77 members = 7% of the workforce is Latinx). She announced the awarding of a Boston College's Lynch Leadership Academy Grant (Micro Academy) in the amount of \$35,000 to recruit a diverse workforce; this grant was written by Superintendent Marotta. Mrs. McArthur related that at the Leadership Academy, the Lynch Leadership team spoke about equity-centered hiring. She thanked her supervisor, Bonnie Antkowiak and the HR Team, Krysten Howell, Judy Manzi, Cherie Pinardi, Jennifer Schmidt and Tracey Prescott. Mrs. McArthur announced a Blood Drive honoring Bruce Michitson that will be held on August 26, 2021.

Dr. Marotta announced that Bruce Michitson had been moved yesterday to a regular room after a month in ICU.

Attorney Rosa thanked Mrs. McArthur on her update and was pleased with the advancement in recruitment of diverse candidates. He referenced the translation of documents as a specific example. Attorney Rosa noted that there should be pride in diversifying our workforce.

School Committee Reports/Communications ~ Mr. Wood: Diversity Officer.

Mr. Wood noted that progress had been achieved but more work needed to be completed in this endeavor. He related that the type of position could be either a Human Resources position, an Administrator or contracting with a nationally recognized firm(s). Vice Chair Wood noted the three options and asked for any feedback on this matter.

Mayor Fiorentini wanted to partner with the schools on this position.

Mr. Wood suggested the exploration of the firm since they specialize in this area and have had success. He noted a recommendation could be brought up at the next meeting.

Superintendent Marotta was excited with the work underway in this area. She announced that today a two-year professional development initiative had begun with a Chicago firm Equity Imperative funded out of the Title I Grant. Dr. Marotta reported that there would be conversations on equity, race,

