

IN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
 Worcester, Massachusetts
 Monday, July 20, 2020
 Agenda #23

The School Committee of the Worcester Public Schools met in Open Session at 5:32 p.m. virtually in Room 410 of the Durkin Administration Building on Monday, July 20, 2020.

There were present at the Call to Order:

Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey, Mr. Foley,
 Mr. Monfredo, Ms. Novick and Mayor Petty

There was absent: Ms. McCullough

Mr. Foley left the meeting at 5:45 p.m.

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| 1. | <u>gb #0-236</u> - Administration
(July 15, 2020) | School Reopening/
Update on |
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To consider an update on school reopening.

Mayor Petty began by stating that the purpose of this special meeting was to present a preliminary overview of the plans for the reopening of school. He said there would be a presentation followed by questions and that the meeting was being streamed on Facebook and You Tube.

Brian Allen, Chief Financial and Operations Officer of the Worcester Public Schools provided an analysis regarding facilities and transportation. He outlined the classroom capacities using both the six and three feet social distancing models. Although guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is still unavailable, Mr. Allen presented transportation parameters which included large and mid-size buses along with wheelchair buses.

Dr. Mary Meade-Montaque, Secondary Schools Manager and Dr. Marie Morse, Elementary School Manager both spoke to two return to school models. The first would have students attend school in-person fifty percent of the time, and another that would have them attend one third of the time. The fifty percent model is based on three feet spacing between students and would include two in-person days each week.

The one third model is based on the six feet spacing between students and would include one day of in-person learning per week. Both options allow for the fact that students who need more in-person support, like English language learners and SPED students, would attend in-person school more often than other students. If full remote learning becomes necessary, the hybrid models presented would allow for easier conversion to full remote learning.

Sarah Kyriazis, Instructional Technology and Digital Learning Manager stated that every student will be provided with a device and hotspots, if needed. Chromebooks will be provided to staff including Instructional Assistants.

Robert Pezzella, School Safety Director outlined the protocol for PPE, cleaning and disinfecting. Temperatures will not be taken upon arrival and COVID-19 testing will not be performed. The district will notify the parents and the Department of Public Health if there is a positive case. Parents should monitor their child's health and employees should be cognizant of any symptoms of COVID-19 and stay home if they are sick.

Mayor Petty opened up the meeting to allow attendees to ask questions or provide comments. Some of the questions and concerns put forth by parents, students and employees were:

Questions

1. Who decides 3 or 6 feet separation of students?
2. Why is Friday an off day?
3. Is 100% remote an option?
4. How will SPED students not fall behind?
5. What is the cleaning protocol on the buses?
6. What about loud sounds for autistic children?
7. Why are temperatures not being taken?

8. If the schools don't test daily for the virus, how do you prevent students from passing the virus back and forth to each other, especially in the high risk Latino community?
9. What provisions will be taken to limit amount of screen time for kindergarten students?
10. How will junior and high school students be expected to maintain social distancing?
11. What about Early College?
12. What about children who are carriers and show no symptoms?
13. Can remote learning be done any time of day?
14. Are there plans to improve communication with refugee families and those who are not technology savvy?
15. How are IEP's being managed?
16. Will students be allowed to remove masks while in the cafeteria?
17. Who developed the models?
18. Will teachers be paid double salary for Zoom meetings?
19. What steps will be taken for the students with behavioral and speech therapy who are not able to wear masks?
20. Who will be there to support the students who have anxiety due to COVID-19 concerns?
21. Will the bathrooms be cleaned more than they are currently being cleaned?
22. Will every student receive a Chromebook?
23. What about MCAS?
24. Who pays for a broken Chromebook?
25. Are the hand sanitizers being checked for methanol?
26. Why are parents not allowed to see other learners?
27. How is absenteeism going to be addressed?

28. If a vaccine is created, would all students go back to in person learning?
29. Do teachers need a doctor's note if found to be positive?
30. What is the plan when teachers call out sick?
31. Can the school day be extended to accommodate working parents?
32. Could a child in Group A be moved to Group B?
33. What about WTHS shop weeks?
34. Will there be extra tutors for inclusion classrooms?
35. What about child care for parents who work?
36. What about the learning gap from the spring?
37. What about teachers with underlying conditions? Is a doctor's note sufficient to teach from home?
38. Will there be a video presented on what to expect if you do choose the hybrid model?
39. What about the Arts, especially for SPED students?
40. What if schools have to be totally shut down again?
41. Does a child lose their place in the lottery if they choose remote learning?
42. Can parents supplement curriculum with their own?
43. How are classrooms being cleaned?
44. What about SPED students who have a nurse or monitor on the bus?
45. Will there be plexiglass barriers for compromised employees?
46. What about food?
47. Will the city provide enough wi-fi coverage?
48. Will there be virtual dual language courses for families who do not speak Spanish?
49. What about hands on equipment for IEP students?

50. Are fans allowed?
51. How will testing on each subject be done?
52. Will WTHS students be doing their co-op's?
53. Who will be making the final decision among the three plans?
54. Are you addressing Zoom etiquette?
55. Can you ensure that students are given work to meet their academic levels?
56. If I choose the hybrid model, but find that I would prefer 100% remote, can I switch?
57. Will I lose my football eligibility if the sports season is cancelled?
58. Can lessons be accessed in Day Care?

Comments

1. I don't feel comfortable sending my child back to school.
2. It may be beneficial to look at how universities factored in parametrics.
3. This virus is airborne, children will be carriers.
4. If the School Committee is still doing virtual meetings, children should not be going back to school.
5. I have many concerns about safety and feel it is unwise to move forward. Our children should not be sacrificial lambs to an economic recovery.
6. Some schools are too old and poorly ventilated.
7. Teachers are scared to go back without testing in the building.
8. We had continuous communication with my child's teachers.
9. Parents currently send sick children to school.
10. Our family had a great summer school experience.
11. I believe that safety should trump everything.
12. DESE guidelines are not really created with what is best for public health.

13. Students miss their teachers and classmates.
14. It may be wise to start a routine now to prepare your child for the fall.
15. Disappointed by the lack of discussion of teacher safety.
16. Teachers have been wonderful during the shutdown.
17. I am happy with the flexibility offered.
18. It is disrespectful to staff that there was no teacher meeting.
19. Huge difference between initial remote learning and summer school learning.

On a roll call of 6-0-1 (absent Mr. Foley) the meeting was adjourned at 11:03 p.m.

Helen A. Friel, Ed.D.
Clerk of the School Committee