



Hingham Public Schools: School Reopening Committee

Wednesday, May 12, 2021

Minutes

1. Call to Order:

The meeting, held via Zoom, was called to order at 3:00 PM by Dr. Austin. Dr. Austin welcomed the following members of the 2021-2022 School Reopening (RRAC) and facilitated introductions.

HPS Representatives:

Dr. Paul Austin, Superintendent
Dr. Suzanne Vinnes, Director of Student Services
Tony Keady, East Principal
Dr. Elizabeth Wilcox, Foster Principal
Katie Roberts, K-12 Science Director
Mary Andrews, K-12 ELA Director
Alison Janulewicz, HMS Asst. Principal
Nicole Piantes, HHS Asst. Principal
June Gustafson, HEA President

Hingham School Committee Representative:

Jennifer Benham

Absent:

Dr. Jamie LaBillois, Assistant Superintendent

2. Overview:

Dr. Austin reviewed the committee objectives, timeline, current district status, and committee members shared hopes and dreams for the 2021-2022 school year.

Discussion:

- Looking forward to a return to a sense of normality, positivity, peace, predictability, good health. Student focused, future focused emphasis of planning.
- Reopening work will be largely completed by June, unless substantial guidance comes out over the summer.

3. Committee Objectives:

- a. Consider district needs and possible conditions for Fall 2021.
- b. Prepare a report of recommendations and actions steps for the School Committee to consider no later than June 25, 2021.
- c. Address and incorporate additional guidance from DESE when released during summer 2021 and refine plan accordingly.

4. Considerations for Fall 2021

- a. What are the current knowns/unknowns?

- b. What future conditions might we anticipate and plan for?
- c. What do we absolutely need to have in place for Fall 2021?
- d. What do we need to have ready to go if pivoting is necessary during the school year?
- e. What health and safety protocols do we need for the fall of 2021?

5. Health and Safety Subcommittee:

Tony Keady (chair)

Jen Benham (SC rep)

Discussion:

- Positive news: vaccines for ages 12+, However, unlikely that elementary students will be vaccinated in the fall. Discussion of ramifications/limitations of emergency approval.
- Dr. Austin does not feel that a vaccine mandate is a local decision, and should be a state/DESE decision. HPS will encourage and support student access to vaccine for all who are eligible. CIC (vendor who administered our district pool testing initiative) is working on some curriculum/educational materials about the vaccine and is prepared to run a vaccine clinic should we decide to offer that option.
- Discussion of whether testing will be needed for staff and students. T. Keady will discuss with CIC—they have capacity to continue into the fall if needed. We need to be thoughtful of the time and money and return on investment, particularly once DESE funds discontinue. If pool testing is recommended for unvaccinated students (e.g.--<12 y.o.), we might be able to use our own nursing staff and not need the third party provider. Will discuss further with Hingham Board of Health/Sue Sarni. We do have the infrastructure that we can implement as needed.
- T. Keady observed that spacing guidelines are most essential to our work in planning and scheduling for fall.
- N. Piantes brought up space challenges RE: COVID waiting room. Will this be a requirement going forward?
- A. Janulewicz discussed the need for additional nursing support.
- J. Gustafson observed that teachers are by nature planners and the uncertainty around evolving guidance is challenging for all.
- Mask protocols will likely be the last decision to be made, as this depends on most current guidance. Easily pivoted.

6. Academic Subcommittee:

Katie Roberts (chair)

Mary Andrews

Dr. Suzanne Vinnes

June Gustafson

Discussion:

- Discussion and group consensus that the learning model will be full day in-person for all. Live streaming/remote learning will no longer be an option, unless an extreme change

of conditions (e.g.- new variant) necessitates drastic measures for all such as a state-wide closure.

- There may be value in continuing with the common platform of Google Classroom to allow for seamless pivoting if conditions warrant. This would need to be discussed further and negotiated.
- Dr. Austin supports having snow days revert back to traditional snow day off (no remote learning on these days).
- Dr. Austin supports a return to traditional secondary bell schedules (e.g.--7 class/6 period/1 drop schedule at HHS); discontinue 90 minute block scheduling at HHS and resume shorter passing times.
- Discussions of adjustments to curriculum and instruction are in progress during department meetings and elementary curriculum committees. What additional tools or supports do teachers need to support all learners?
- Desire by all to continue to leverage the newly increased technological skill, capacity and infrastructure to enrich classroom instruction. Additional PD for teachers to continue to expand on technology skills and effectively integrate into classroom practice.
- Discussion of protocols regarding students absences. Group consensus that students who are absent/ill for fewer than 10 days should follow traditional make-up work protocols; live streaming will not be provided in the event of short term absences.
- Dr. Vinnes discussed individualized accommodations, such as Edgenuity, Swivl robot, etc., that might be implemented on a case-by-case basis for extended hospitalizations or other such medically documented extended absences.

7. Facilities Subcommittee

Dr. Beth Wilcox (chair)

Alison Janulewicz

Nicole Piantes

Discussion:

- Facilities considerations for Foster School. Is there a continued need for the Foster North campus? Dr. Wilcox would like additional time to analyze the space needs before making a final decision. Lunch, instructional spaces for SPED/small groups are of particular concern. Foster enrollment has dropped, so this will factor into the final decision regarding Foster North.
- Dr. Austin shared that current district K registration is up to 240, could be as high as 260-270
- Will tents be necessary for the fall? Likely still needed for the fall for lunch and music if distancing requirements continue.
- HHS medical waiting room concerns: students need access to a private bathroom
- Space considerations for KIA preschool class.
- What will our needs be with regard to custodial services and staffing?
- Dr. Austin would like to resume transportation for HHS students. Are there enough busses?
- Will food services continue to operate on a pre-order basis? Will free lunch continue for all?

8. Next Meeting:

- a. Next meeting scheduled for Wednesday, May 19th at 3PM

