

**Return to School Planning Team 2020 - Meeting Minutes
GREENWICH PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

DATE: 6-25-2020

LOCATION: Virtual - Zoom

ATTENDANCE: ***Return to School Planning Team 2020 Members***

Dr. Toni Jones, Superintendent

Ms. Karen Hirsh, Board of Education

Ms. Mary Keller, GPS Head of Nursing, State of CT Task Force Member

Dr. Katherine Noble, GPS Medical Doctor Consultant

Cabinet

Dr. Ann Carabillo, Deputy Superintendent

Mr. Sean O'Keefe, Chief Operating Officer

Ms. Mary Forde, Chief Pupil Personnel Services Officer

Ms. Shamain Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer

Mr. Michael Ting, Chief Technology Officer (*absent*)

Mr. Marc D'Amico, Director K-8 Curriculum

Ms. Sasha Houlihan, Director of Communications

1. Meeting Opening/Call to Order

Call to Order - Dr. Jones called the meeting to order at 10:05AM

2. Share Focus Group Work

Overview:

Dr. Jones shared the Task Force team members and their respective roles, in addition to the various Focus Groups which include: Health Advisement, School Scheduling Complexities, Transportation, Food Service, Athletics Return to Play (CIAC), District Communications, Facilities Disinfecting and Cleaning Protocols, Human Resources Staffing and Health Related Challenges, Curriculum and Instruction, Teacher Professional Learning, and Special Education, EL, and Unique Learners. Dr. Jones intends for each of these groups to be focused on their own specialty areas to ensure efficiency in utilizing people's time and expertise.

Overarching Goals:

Dr. Jones shared four overarching goals for this Task Force. These goals include:

- If permitted, prioritize our youngest learners and those students with special needs to be physically present in the school building for instruction.
- High quality programming for all ages whether Distance Learning or Hybrid.
- Maintain safety and security to the highest degree considering guidance from the CDC, World Health Organization, CT State Department of Health, Greenwich Health Department, GPS Head of Nursing, and GPS Medical Doctor Consultant.
- Enhanced focus on the social and emotional health of staff and students given the COVID-19 impacts.

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GPS will be preparing for three options: a full return to school, a hybrid model where students are on campus some days and home other days, and a full distance learning plan.

Health Advisement:

Ms. Mary Keller shared that we must be adaptive and creative when planning for COVID-19 considerations. Ms. Keller shared her work on the state-level/regional task force for reopening planning, including surveying constituents, health monitoring, etc. Ms. Keller shared that we are hoping to have guidance from the Governor by the end of this week or next week. Ms. Keller also shared several considerations for the schools on social distancing, health monitoring, budget/fiscal concerns, cleaning and sanitation, and more. Ms. Keller also shared guidance from the CDC and stated that our district is in a good position to align with this guidance, including monitoring staff and students upon entry to the building.

Dr. Katherine Noble shared her commitment in her role as Medical Advisor to the District. Dr. Noble has participated in weekly COVID-19 community pediatric meetings with Yale pediatric infectious disease specialist Dr. Thomas Murray since March and noted that guidance changes frequently. Dr. Noble shared an update on the current status of COVID-19, including a background of the virus in CT and considerations for across the country. CDC projection for the State of CT looks favorable for the month of July. Dr. Noble shared considerations for the virus from a pediatric standpoint, noting that disease course tends to be milder, complication rates lower, and outcomes generally much better in children. Dr. Noble shared that we must approach reopening planning with an adaptive mindset, be prepared with multiple scenarios and be both nimble and decisive in making quick changes as needed.

Return to School Planning

Dr. Jones shared that we will be thoughtful of student, teacher, staff, and family needs when planning for reopening.

Curriculum and Instruction

Dr. Ann Carabillo shared that we are using a variety of different types of support to ensure appropriate curriculum and instruction, including Professional Learning for our teachers. Dr. Carabillo will also gather feedback from the Summer School/ESY programs to learn any best practices or improvements. Dr. Jones shared the potential to ask our Board of Education for additional Professional Development Days for our teachers early in the school year to ensure proper planning and education for COVID-19-related opening. Dr. Jones also shared that we must await guidance from the Governor on Distance Learning, graduation requirements and other necessary waivers before we can make any final decisions.

Transportation

Dr. Jones shared that Transportation is a complex issue given social distancing considerations, cost constraints, staffing (bus monitor needs), etc. Dr. Jones hopes that the new guidelines won't be as stringent but believes they will still be very restrictive. Dr. Noble shared that these guidelines are extremely challenging as stated. Ms. Hirsh echoed what Dr. Jones shared in regards to the complexity of these guidelines and asked that the District share a survey to

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understand bus transportation needs. Dr. Jones is planning to share this survey hopefully by next week.

Food Service

Dr. Jones shared that Food Service complexities include: preparation, delivery of food and other touch-related considerations.

Athletics/Return to Play

Dr. Jones shared that CIAC has their own guidance document which includes: social distancing, disinfecting sports locker rooms and equipment, temperature monitoring, low/moderate/high risk sports, etc.

Facilities Disinfecting and Cleaning

Dr. Jones shared that Dan Watson and Tom Bobkowski have been leading the work for Facilities, Disinfecting, and Security. GPS has installed Viking Cleaning Products for disinfecting. The team went through Summer School guidance to make necessary changes to the building, including automatic paper towel dispensers, removing blow dryers in the bathroom, ordering PPE equipment, etc. Ms. Hirsh asked the District to consider how to handle children and/or staff who cannot wear masks for health reasons or due to learning differences. Dr. Jones shared the importance of waiting to hear if masks will be considered as guidance or requirements, but the District will likely need to adhere to the comfort levels of parents and their children.

Safety & Security

Dr. Jones shared that yellow social distancing floor adhesives have been ordered for all schools. Traffic coordination is also being worked on if staggered start or higher traffic needs are anticipated.

Human Resources and Staffing

Ms. Shamain Johnson shared that the HR Department is working with Dr. Jones to share a survey with teachers to understand their comfort levels for returning to schools. Dr. Noble asked about the feasibility of teachers working from home and projecting into a live classroom of students. Dr. Jones shared that there are a number of complexities and considerations if this was to be an option, given teacher contracts. Ms. Mary Forde asked if the state will provide guidance on allowable absences. Dr. Jones believes that a doctor's note will be the only requirement for a teacher/staff member not returning to work.

GPS Communications

Dr. Jones shared that Ms. Sasha Houlihan will continue to send communications on behalf of the District throughout the Summer months to share updates and information to district families. Ms. Houlihan will work with Dr. Jones to survey District parents and teachers/staff to understand comfort levels for returning to school and bus/transportation needs. Ms. Houlihan will also help coordinate short educational videos to teach students about protocols and procedures when

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returning to school, including how to properly wash your hands, how to move around the building using social distancing, etc.

Special Education and Unique Learners

Dr. Jones shared that we will plan for our Special Education and unique learners, including English Language Learners. Ms. Mary Forde shared that she is participating in a meeting next week to understand additional complexities for students with disabilities. Ms. Hirsh asked about the services that were missed during school closures and if they would be made up and if graduate students who need internship hours could be utilized for this work. Ms. Forde mentioned that IEPs will need to be written by staff, but that there are interns working this summer to help support the PPS staff.

School Scheduling Complexities

Dr. Jones shared that all elementary classroom space has been evaluated for square footage and room usage considerations, and section number and sizes have been assessed. Dr. Jones shared that middle school scheduling considerations include determining if sixth grade could be held at another site and if/what electives could be capitalized in a unique way to support safe contact between students and staff. Ms. Johnson asked if eighth grade should be the grade level to move offsite. Dr. Jones shared that this was considered and that parent input and grade-level size considerations will be used to determine if this approach will be taken. Ms. Forde asked if there is to be a hybrid approach, how can the District best consider schedules for parents for children at different schools being in and out of their schools. Dr. Jones understands this challenge for parents and will use parent surveys to determine the most effective approach. Dr. Jones shared that for the high school social distancing is not an option given the number of students and the size of the building. GHS has their own Committee for reopening given the number of complexities, looking at a more simplified schedule and being adaptive to quick changes, if needed. The District is trying to avoid an AM/PM schedule because it is not a cost effective approach to school scheduling. Dr. Jones will bring in GHS representatives for their own updates starting next week, if they are prepared to share their thoughts on planning.

Task Force Meetings

Dr. Jones shared the dates of the upcoming Task Force Meetings. The next meeting will likely focus on scheduling.

Focus Group Input

Dr. Carabillo will help lead focus group input sessions with elementary, secondary and specialist teachers and members of PTAC. Ms. Forde asked if the team could add a parent input session for parents with students who have disabilities and a session in Spanish for Spanish-speaking parents. Dr. Jones noted that she will add in both of those groups to the input sessions. Ms. Hirsh asked that we continue to add input groups as needed if we discover additional groups or considerations after survey input.

BOE Meeting

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Dr. Jones shared the dates of the upcoming Board of Education Special Meetings where Task Force details/updates will be shared.

Other details

Dr. Jones shared that the GPS website has launched a page on reopening where meeting details, meeting minutes and other relevant information are hosted.

3. Adjournment

Dr. Jones adjourned the meeting at 11:43AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Sasha Houlihan