

The Regular Meeting of the Brockton School Committee was held this evening, at seven o'clock. These minutes contain a summary of the meeting and list items that were under discussion.

Mayor Sullivan, Chair called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m., followed by a salute to the flag and asked for a moment of silence for a true Brockton Champion, Marvelous Marvin Hagler who passed away unexpectedly at the age of 66. Our thoughts and prayers go to the Hagler Family may he rest in peace.

Mayor Sullivan read the following information for the record.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic and State of Emergency, on March 12, 2020, Governor Baker issued an Executive Order Temporarily Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A sec. 20. Pursuant to the Order, public bodies are temporarily relieved from the Open Meeting Law's 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."

This meeting will be held and will be accessible to the public via Brockton Community Access, Brockton Public Schools website, www.bpsma.org, YouTube and Comcast channel 98

The public can access this meeting via this link: www.youtube.com/TheBrocktonChannels

Mayor Sullivan thanked Mike Simmons and his team from the Brockton Community Access, Malinda Campbell, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and the Informational Technology Center team that has been working diligently.

Mayor Sullivan took a roll call to establish a quorum.

Mayor Sullivan, Chair – yes	Mr. D'Agostino, Vice-Chair – yes	Ms. Asack – yes
Ms. Mendes – absent	Mr. Minichiello – yes	Mr. Rodrigues – yes
Ms. Sullivan – yes	Mr. Sullivan – yes (zoom)	

Also Present: Superintendent Thomas, Executive Team Members, Kim Gibson, BEA President, Richard Bath

Hearing of Visitors

None

Consent Agenda

Mayor Sullivan, Chair explained the purpose of the Consent Agenda and asked members if they would like to remove any items for further discussion. Mr. Sullivan asked to remove Item A and Mr. D'Agostino asked to remove Item D, both giving an overview report on the consent agenda items.

Item A, Approval of Bid Review Subcommittee Meeting Report on March 10, 2021, discussing the agenda items:

- a. To accept the report of the Subcommittee as presented
- b. To accept the following bids:
Food Service Management Provider RFP

Mr. Sullivan moved to approve Item A, Approval of Bid Review Subcommittee Meeting Report on March 10, 2021, seconded by Mr. Minichiello.

Mayor Sullivan, Chair took a roll call vote.

Mayor Sullivan, Chair – yes	Mr. D'Agostino, Vice-Chair – yes	Ms. Asack – yes
Ms. Mendes – absent	Mr. Minichiello – yes	Mr. Rodrigues – yes
Ms. Sullivan – yes	Mr. Sullivan – yes (zoom)	

Voted: to approve the motion, unanimous.

Item D, Acceptance of February 23, 2021 Policy Subcommittee Meeting Report, discussing the agenda items:

1. Call to Order
2. COVID Metrics Update/Dr. Richard Herman, FACEP Pandemic Consultant
3. Executive Session
4. Other Business
5. Adjournment

Mr. Minichiello moved to approve Item D, Acceptance of February 23, 2021 Policy Subcommittee Meeting Report, seconded by Ms. Sullivan.

Mayor Sullivan, Chair took a roll call vote.

Mayor Sullivan, Chair – yes	Mr. D’Agostino, Vice-Chair – yes	Ms. Asack – yes
Ms. Mendes – absent	Mr. Minichiello – yes	Mr. Rodrigues – yes
Ms. Sullivan – yes	Mr. Sullivan – yes (zoom)	

Voted: to approve the motion, unanimous.

Ms. Sullivan moved the Superintendent’s recommendation to approve the remainder Consent Agenda items: B, C, E, F, G, and H seconded by Mr. D’Agostino.

- B. Approval of Minutes: March 2, 2021 Regular School Committee Meeting
- C. Acceptance of March 2, 2021 Policy Manual Review Subcommittee Meeting Report
- E. Approval of Minutes: February 16, 2021 Special School Committee Meeting
- F. Approval of Minutes: February 9, 2021 Regular School Committee Meeting
- G. Notification of Personnel Appointments: Non-Certified Personnel
- H. Acceptance of Notification of Personnel Actions: Leaves of Absence, Resignations, Retirements

Mayor Sullivan took a roll call vote to approve the remainder Consent Agenda items:

Mayor Sullivan, Chair – yes	Mr. D’Agostino, Vice-Chair – yes	Ms. Asack – yes
Ms. Mendes – absent	Mr. Minichiello – yes	Mr. Rodrigues – yes
Ms. Sullivan – yes	Mr. Sullivan – yes (zoom)	

Voted: to approve the motion, unanimous.

Superintendent’s Report

Dr. Richard Herman, FACEP Pandemic Consultant – COVID-19 Metrics update

Mayor Sullivan mentioned Dr. Herman apologized not being unable to attend tonight’s meeting due to a family matter. Mayor Sullivan gave a metrics update. As of today, there are 21 new cases city wide giving a total of 12,258 with 413 loss of life and 1 on yesterday, current active positive cases are 178, our average daily confirmed case rate is 20.0 and then our positive test rate is under four we’re at 3.43 which keeps us in a yellow classification for the week. The VA hospital, Good Samaritan Medical Center and Brockton Signature all their patient’s numbers are down as well, and ICU numbers are very marginal. Things are starting to trend in the right direction.

Report of Hybrid Opening Return Update

Superintendent Thomas gave an update as we opened in hybrid, he spent time at the Keith Center and Huntington school working closely with Principal Cynthia Burns, Principal John Lander, and their administrative team for a great opening.

Superintendent Thomas shared a story about a student who was eager to return in person at the Keith Center. As the van was in transit to picking her up the window shattered while at the gas station and was unable to get her. Principal Burns, Assistant Principal England, Associate Principal Connors, team and staff knew they had to do something to get her to school. With their advocacy they were able to get a van company pick up the student for school for the first time in a year, that’s the dedication that our staff goes above and beyond and care about their students and thanked them.

Superintendent Thomas introduced Dr. Murray, Principal of Brockton High School to give an update on the return of students in grades 11th and 12th on today.

Dr. Murray mentioned it was great having students back in person and great experiences with freshman and sophomores these past two weeks, at times it felt like a normal school day with students in their classes, hallways, and cafeterias. There were approximately 600 students (orange cohort) today and anticipates 800/900 students (green cohort) on Friday. It has been a great experience, the staff has been fantastic, we have teachers pitching in making sure work areas are wiped down and giving students directions to their classes. There haven’t been any issues with wearing of masks and social distancing and our custodians are constantly on the move cleaning the building, it’s been a great team effort by everyone.

Superintendent Thomas thanked the Middle School Principal’s, administrative teams and teachers welcoming students back in-person and appreciates all their hard work.

Question/Answer

Mr. Minichiello asked Dr. Murray what is the atmosphere at the high school is with both students and staff? Dr. Murray mentioned some students were a little hesitant returning, but the teachers made them feel welcome, they are starting to see students change their minds about staying remote and coming in one day a week.

Superintendent Thomas asked Ms. Laurie Mason, Director of Special Education to give an update how things are going for our students with disabilities.

Ms. Mason mentioned we're excited that the students are going to hopefully return soon at 100%. She gave an update to a question Mr. Sullivan asked at a prior meeting, wanting to know the number of high needs students working remote, it varies between 12% to 14% and believes the numbers will increase. Transportation to and from school is going well. Students are wearing their masks or shield, practicing social distancing.

Question/Answer

Mr. Minichiello asked Ms. Mason the same question, what's the atmosphere like inside the classrooms? Ms. Mason mentioned it's great to see how excited the students are, and many have not missed a beat, she mentioned going in the classroom to speak with them they remind her they are in class and continue working. The teachers and staff are excited to be back in person and believes it was the right way allowing students to transition and provide stability.

Superintendent Thomas thanked Teachers, Staff, Support Staff, Food Service Workers, Custodians, Counselors, Paraprofessionals and MTA's. He also thanked Sharon Wolder and John Snelgrove for the work that they've done with our adjustment counselors and the work that has been done with Cathy Leger and the guidance counselors at the middle schools and high school. They have spent a lot of time and effort putting a lot of work together in professional development and provided social and emotional service while students were in remote.

Superintendent Thomas shared a story during a visit at the Gilmore school. He walked around and stopped by a first-grade classroom that had about six students and asked if everyone was excited to be back, and they replied yes. One of the students called him over to his desk and said can I tell you something, "it was my dream to be here today".

Reentering Our Schools (power point)

Ms. June Saba-Maguire shared a series of first day's photos and videos of schools in the district, the Arnone School, Baker School, Davis School, George School and Gilmore School that demonstrates the excitement of the kids being back in school. Moving forward to 100% in-person learning we know that it's going to make a tremendous difference for our students and from the beginning we all recognize that nothing can replace in-person learning and it's where the kids need to be, and we're looking forward to having everyone back.

Question/Answer

Mr. Minichiello asked what school was the student from that wore the blue shirt and was that a uniform? Ms. Saba-Maguire responded that he was from the Gilmore School and yes that is a school uniform.

Comment

Mr. Minichiello mentioned how nice the student looked in his school uniform and takes away all the social pressure regarding to the latest and greatest in styles and expensive brand names.

Superintendent Thomas mentioned Jess Silva-Hodges is putting together a presentation of videos to present in the April school committee meeting.

DESE Guidance on In-Person Learning and Student Learning Time Requirements (power point)

Superintendent Thomas mentioned this was presented in the policy meeting but it's important to present it at the full school committee meeting for everyone to understand our plan with coming back to full in-person learning five days a week. A message will go out to parents tomorrow explaining this information and notices will go home from schools as we always inform parents/guardians every step of the way before retuning on April 5th.

The Department Education (DOE) delivered new guidance last week and the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) voted on Friday, March 5, to give Commissioner Riley the authority to determine when hybrid and remote models may no longer count towards required student learning time hours. Commissioner Riley put out a notice to all school districts that students will need to return full in-person; Elementary schools beginning April 5, 2021, Middle schools beginning April 28, 2021 and High Schools a determination will be made in April.

Commissioner Riley had a meeting last week with the Superintendent's and the guidance came out that hybrid and remote learning will no longer count towards student learning time hours unless parents choose to keep their students remote. Elementary schools need to be back full in-person five days a week PreK-5 on April 5th, middle schools would begin in April 28th a determination for high school will be made in early April.

DESE is allowing a waiver process, especially for districts such as ours who have been fully remote for most of the year. The waiver for elementary schools must be submitted by Monday, March 22, 2021 and middle schools by Monday, April 12, 2021 having a clear phase in plan. Districts and schools will receive a response within five business days of submitting a waiver request. We will submit a waiver for Pre-K to 5 and delay asking for a two-week delay to April 26th. Tents are being purchased for all schools to allow students to eat lunch outside and maintain the 6ft. social distance. The sub separate classrooms would transition to full five days in person starting on Monday, April 5th and PreK-12 will transition to 50% in-person, on April 26th Pre-K to 8th will start full-time in person 5 days a week on April 26th.

Superintendent Thomas discussed the two cohorts that will go into effect on Monday, April 5, 2021- PreK-8:

- Orange 1 and Orange 2 cohorts combine to become Orange Group. (Tuesday's and Thursday's)
- Green 1 and Green 2 cohorts combine to become Green Group. (Wednesday's and Friday's)
- The two groups will alternate Mondays.

On April 5th, the Orange Group will come in Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday.

On April 12th, the Green Group will come in Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

Full remote will remain an option for families if they choose to stay fully remote or move to fully remote. If a family wants to move from fully remote when we come back at 100% it's going to take time to get the child back in school. The Department of Education says to allow up to six weeks to change and we see it could take up to four weeks. We will send out a survey asking for that commitment to full in-person or full remote. The current options for the high school is hybrid in remote learning until we receive guidance from the Department of Education.

Distancing for Full In-Person Learning is 3ft. between the edge of the seat to the edge of the seat, lunches must remain at 6ft. and that is the reason for needing tents to provide additional space for students to eat lunch. Buses would move to two students per seat.

DESE Findings data studies have shown there has been no real significant difference between the positive cases of COVID-19, it's has stayed the same whether at 6ft. or 3ft. of social distance (classrooms only) and cafeterias must remain at 6ft. of social distance.

All information will be provided in detail to parents, on our website, text, phone call and schools will always communicate this information once it's voted on tonight by the committee. We encourage any parent that has any questions about the return to full in-person learning to call their child's school.

Question/Answer

Mr. Minichiello asked Superintendent Thomas to explain the credits if a student decides to stay remote. Superintendent Thomas mentioned the Department of Education is leaving the option open to families that are not comfortable sending their children back or if there's a medical issue. We will accommodate those families and their classes will count their grades and credits.

Comment

Superintendent Thomas thanked and appreciates the hard work of the Executive Team, Principals and appreciates the partnership with our Union Presidents, Kim Gibson, BEA President, we have set the example for cooperation and going above and beyond for the students.

Mr. D'Agostino echoed Superintendent Thomas' remarks.

Question/Answer

Ms. Sullivan asked Superintendent Thomas if we're in good shape with school adjustment counselors when students return?

Superintendent Thomas replied yes and asked Ms. Wolder to go over and address Ms. Sullivan's' question. Ms. Wolder mentioned the adjustment counselors have been working along with families through the pandemic. Where there were specific needs the adjustment counselors have connected families with getting resources and continued to meet with students remote. We have some schools with fewer adjustment counselors and are in the process of putting a job ad out. Currently we have additional help with our BPS mentors, and we partner with Champion City and they have been a strong support for the schools and families.

FY22 Budget Update

Mr. Aldo Petronio, Chief Financial Officer gave an update of the FY22 budget. As reported earlier this evening the Student Opportunity Act along with the Chapter 70 fund increase brought in a net of \$18 million into our budget for next year. The funds are intended to reach out in areas that we've been lacking in all these years which the Student Opportunity Act focused Special Education, English Language Learners, Health insurance costs and coverage, and low-income children in poverty. These funds will be earmarked and geared towards those areas to improve. We've just started the budget process, the governor has given his budget which is where the increase came from and in a few weeks, we'll have a house of representatives' figure, that gives us a good indication of where the budget is heading. Usually the house and senate are close to one another then it goes to the compromise committee, we should have a good planning year for our budget going forward.

Mr. D'Agostino gave a summary of the Finance Subcommittee meeting that met earlier this evening, March 16, 2021, with a similar presentation from Mr. Petronio. Superintendent Thomas requested the authority to begin to post positions to get resumes in and have candidates, the positions would say subject to funding and approved by the committee. The Finance Committee voted unanimously in favor of recommending to the full committee to grant the Superintendent's authority.

Mr. Minichiello motioned to approve the Finance Subcommittee Report provided by Vice-Chair, Mr. D'Agostino, seconded by Ms. Asack.

Mayor Sullivan took a roll call vote.

Mayor Sullivan, Chair – yes	Mr. D'Agostino, Vice-Chair – yes	Ms. Asack – yes
Ms. Mendes – absent	Mr. Minichiello – yes	Mr. Rodrigues – yes
Ms. Sullivan – yes	Mr. Sullivan – yes (zoom)	

Voted: to approve the motion, unanimous.

Items to Refer to Subcommittee

None

Unfinished Business

Mr. D'Agostino discussed the Finance Subcommittee Meeting held on Tuesday, March 9, 2021 Agenda #1 Lease of General Warehouse Space. Mr. Petronio BPS/CFO discussed the bid for the warehouse space with a five-year lease agreement. Mr. Sullivan motioned to move the warehouse space favorable to the full School Committee and full allocation to come out of the non-net spending of the school department, seconded by Mr. Minichiello. A roll call vote was taken and the recommendation to the full committee passed unanimously.

Mr. Minichiello motioned to approve the Finance Subcommittee Report as presented, seconded by Ms. Sullivan.

Mayor Sullivan took a roll call vote.

Mayor Sullivan, Chair – yes	Mr. D'Agostino, Vice-Chair – yes	Ms. Asack – yes
Ms. Mendes – absent	Mr. Minichiello – yes	Mr. Rodrigues – yes
Ms. Sullivan – yes	Mr. Sullivan – yes (zoom)	

Voted: to approve the motion, unanimous.

Mr. D'Agostino discussed the Policy Subcommittee Meeting held earlier this evening, March 16, 2021 recommending the following.

- Students in sub-separate classrooms would transition to full-time, in-person learning on April 5. All other classrooms would remain hybrid and move to 50 percent capacity that same day, meaning students would be in school up to three days per week.
- Students in preK-8 would then transition to full-time, in-person learning on April 26.
- BHS students would remain in a hybrid learning model until further notice.
- Additionally, permission was granted for Superintendent Thomas to request a 2-week DESE waiver for preK-8, moving their return date from April 5, 2021 to April 26, 2021.

Mr. Minichiello motioned to approve the Policy Subcommittee as presented, seconded by Mr. Rodrigues.

Mayor Sullivan took a roll call vote.

Mayor Sullivan, Chair – yes	Mr. D’Agostino, Vice-Chair – yes	Ms. Asack – yes
Ms. Mendes – absent	Mr. Minichiello – yes	Mr. Rodrigues – yes
Ms. Sullivan – yes	Mr. Sullivan – yes (zoom)	

Voted: to approve the motion, unanimous.

New Business

Mr. D’Agostino discussed a resolve that he sent to all school committee members, that he and school committee member Ms. Cynthia Mendes worked on. Many parents and people in the community have reached out to members with concerns regarding MCAS testing from last year and this year’s sophomores.

Mr. D’Agostino read the resolve for the record.

WHEREAS the COVID-19 Remote Learning Model and disproportionately affected students with learning disabilities, students of lower socioeconomic status, ELL students and students who identify as minorities; and

WHEREAS the social and emotional trauma both individually and collectively has yet to be truly realized in the students who have experienced the shutdown of their local school buildings and separations from their peers and supportive adults; and

WHEREAS the students of the Commonwealth have already missed valuable face to face instructional opportunities with their teachers and would benefit from focusing on those important instructional opportunities and social emotional supports.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Brockton School Committee rejects the calls for the students of the class of 2022 and 2023 who missed their tenth grade MCAS testing to be required to make it up during the 2020-2021 school year or ever. We demand those students be held harmless for not taking the MCAS and that their graduation requirements shall be determined by locally controlled voices of the School Committee and School Administration within the remaining graduation requirements of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Additionally, we reiterate our call for a moratorium on all high stakes testing for the 2020-2021 school year so all students can benefit from their time being focused on direct instruction.

Mayor Sullivan thanked Mr. D’Agostino and Ms. Mendes.

Mr. Rodrigues motioned to accept the resolve as written, seconded by Mr. D’Agostino.

Mayor Sullivan took a roll call vote.

Mayor Sullivan, Chair – yes	Mr. D’Agostino, Vice-Chair – yes	Ms. Asack – y
Ms. Mendes – absent	Mr. Minichiello – yes	Mr. Rodrigues – yes
Ms. Sullivan – yes	Mr. Sullivan – yes (zoom)	

Voted: to approve the motion, unanimous.

Superintendent Thomas announced to families of seniors, we will be going forward with graduation at the scheduled dates. We are going forward with an outdoor graduation at the Rocky Marciano Stadium. We do not have the exact format of graduation currently but we’re hoping to get a close back to normal as possible and follow the guidelines.

Superintendent Thomas mentioned venues are not holding proms this year. Dr. Murray, Deans, and Senior class advisors are working together to put together outdoor celebrations for our seniors and juniors. Recognition ceremonies for students in grades 5th & 8th will be held outside.

June 4th – June 6th is graduation weekend

June 4th – Huntington and Keith School

June 5th – Brockton High School

June 6th – Rain Date

July 15th – Edison Academy

Superintendent Thomas mentioned although the high school is delayed in the guidance, we do have a plan to have 100% full in-person. Is that is going to be realistic? It may not, we have 4,200 students and 500 staff members but we will be going to 50% on April 5th.

Ms. Asack mentioned Cradle to Crayons provided us with supply bags for students that were distributed at East Middle School during the Grab-and-go Food Program. She thanked the following people for their assistance. Superintendent Thomas, Mr. Thomas McNeely, food service, Mr. Tim Sullivan, school committee member, Mr. Jason Billadeau, custodian, Mr. Jorge Quinones, custodian, Ms. Patricia Burnell-Anderson, cafeteria manager, Ms. Lisa Anderson, cafeteria worker, Ms. Vanie Simeon, cafeteria worker and Mr. Destiny Ihenacho, constituent services liaison, Mayors Office.

Ms. Asack thanked Cradle to Crayons for their continued support. They are in discussion about backpacks and supplies for the summer and have recently donated children and young adult clothes. We treasure our partnership with Cradle to Crayons and hopefully one day we can invite them back to one of our meetings and acknowledge all the help they've given Brockton.

Mayor Sullivan acknowledged he's a dual citizen, American and an Irish. St. Patrick's Day is tomorrow, everyone have a safe holiday.

Executive Session

Mayor Sullivan, Chair mentioned the School Committee will not go into Executive Session this evening.

Ms. Asack motioned to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Sullivan.

Mayor Sullivan took a roll call vote:

Mayor Sullivan, Chair – yes	Mr. D'Agostino, Vice-Chair – yes	Ms. Asack – yes
Ms. Mendes – absent	Mr. Minichiello – yes	Mr. Rodrigues – yes
Ms. Sullivan – yes	Mr. Sullivan – yes (zoom)	

Seeing no further business, the School Committee meeting adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Michael P. Thomas
Superintendent/Secretary

mdc

Power point: Reentering Our Schools, In-Person Return Plan