Public Comment Responses Received During the WPS BOE Meeting on 7/23/2020

Below is the pubic record of public comment responses received during the 7/23/2020 BOE Meeting.

NON-AGENDA ITEMS - No public comment responses were received during the live meeting. One test response was received.

DISCUSSION

1. **Update from the School Reopening Committee** - Public comments are posted exactly as received.

Anthony Granata	11 Lorraine Drive	You mentioned several ideas for special area subjects, including music. Can you give us an update on the instrumental music program (curricular/extra-curricular) and what this would foreseeably look like for our students and teachers?
April Harvey	6th Grade Teacher at BMS	How is the middle school schedule equitable for students who opt for distance learning? The last two hours of every Friday does not seem to be a reasonable amount of time for these students to have access to all of their teachers. All the teachers would be trying to meet with these students at the same time.
April Harvey	6th Grade teacher BMS	Follow up to my previous question: Why is there no built in time for PD for middle school as there is for elementary and high school?
April Russell	12 Highland Road	The kids who choose distance learning at home - while school is fully in person or hybrid - will the teacher be interacting with them? Or will they just be primarily interacting with the students who are there in school in person? How will the teachers have the support they need to deliver?
Cecily Robinson	27 Grassy Plains Rd	What are your plans for reopening PreK (Stepping stones pre school).
David Turchi	15 Colony Rd, Westport, CT	We have a question about the combination of recess and mask breaks. Does this mean that kids will be playing together at recess without masks?
Laurel Syah	12 Cranbury Rd	Can you please address mitigation and especially social distancing at Bedford before the opening of CMS for the hybrid model? Given there are already two schools in the same building, the hybrid still seems like it would be “full in school”. Also what are the other specific mitigation measures, ie plexiglass?

Laurel Syah	12 Cranbury Rd	Can you address the impact that the hybrid model will have on transportation at all levels? Does it also mean the buses will be half full?
Laurel Syah	12 Cranbury Rd	Can you please address how safety will be enforced in the full and hybrid models in the middle school outside the classroom, eg at lunch, in the hallways, at entry and dismissal? It seems like additional personnel would be required to monitor social distancing and mask wearing.
Laurel Syah	12 Cranbury Rd	For high school, can you please address how the schedules will accommodate the unique needs of 9th graders in the hybrid and distance learning models, especially their need to transition and orient to high school academic expectations and SEL?
Laurel Syah	12 Cranbury Rd	For children who opt for the distance learning option in middle school or high school, will they be included in cohorts/pods with children who are in school and all cohort/pod based activities (unlike the elementary school optional distance learning model)?
Lisa Weand	7th grade BMS teacher	In regards to the full distance learning model at the middle school level. Is there any concern around the full 9 period schedule and student not getting breaks from the (computer) screen during the day?
Michael Winser	3 Woodland Dr	I appreciate the work that the committee has done to comprehensively explore and explain the different options possible. My concern is that we (and this is a very broad we) still have only a limited ability to test for the COVID, to prevent transmission of COVID, and of course still only the crudest treatment approach. Masks are clearly helping but we still lack data and yet current cases in CT are still above levels when the schools were closed. I urge Westport Schools to assume that distance learning will be the only safe option and to invest our collective energies (yes I'll help) in planning for this scenario and preparing families for it. As unpopular as this option will be, the cost of another epidemic spread is almost unthinkable.
Michael Winser	3 Woodland Dr	1- How will the board decide which option to use? Specifically, what data will be used to drive the decision? How will that decision change with new data? 2- Given the high rates of asymptomatic transmission and lack of testing it seems like that we will see a non trivial number of teachers becoming infected and unable to work. How do these plans allow for the potential unavailability of teaching staff, including those are isolating, those who have been exposed at home, etc?
Michael Winser	3 Woodland Dr	The hybrid model that has shown up in all of the presentations this evening seems to be predicated on the belief that staying home every second week will reduce risk. Is this belief supported with epidimiological science? Given the incubation period, the lack of testing, and asymptomatic transmission, I'm skeptical. I wonder if a 2 week alternation would be better. That would effectively put each group into a 2 week quarantine to allow for some self-diagnosis.

Michael Winser	3 Woodland Dr	Although I have asked many questions and voiced many opinions, I do want to express how impressed I am with the professional and thoughtful approach brought by everyone involved. Everyone's work is truly appreciated.
Michael Winser	3 Woodland Dr	Ms. Smith highlighted that approximately 15% of parents have indicated they will be opting their children out for one reason or another. Given an estimated grade size of 400 across the district it seems that we should be able to fully staff distance classes (estimated 60 kids) rather than having the students "be the distance learners" in a class full of in-person students. Even with opt out rates at only 10% that would still be enough for two full classes. Yes, this would span geographical districts but that's obviously moot.

Nick Sadler	1 Crow Hollow Lane	Our family deeply appreciates the thoughtful and thorough approach the BOE, Superintendent Scarice, and all our educators, staff, and stakeholders are taking exploring multiple opening plans for the fall. The most important thing our children, our educators, and our families crave is certainty and safety. And this pandemic sadly offers none of that. Because of this, I strongly support Total Distance Learning when school begins and committing to that schedule until Winter Break. Give the necessary detailed attention for our SPED students and faculty who could then safely utilize (both indoors and outdoors) the seven schools that are currently online. We don't have the square footage to even accommodate the State's standards for summer school, which is a 10:1 Group Size Requirement. How do we accomplish this with 5500 students and a middle school offline this fall? Unfortunately, there's still too much we don't know about this disease and its long term effects to risk even attempting a hybrid learning schedule. But, this is what we do know: Case numbers in Connecticut are once again rising. As of today, 31 states are on Connecticut's Travel Ban list - requiring a 14 day self-quarantine. And beginning the first week of August, colleges and universities will be welcoming back their students. According to the STATE OF CONNECTICUT Office of Financial and Academic Affairs For Higher Education (2019) - that's 165,000 students entering our state. Currently, there is ZERO data that is publicly available as to how many students are from those restricted states. Is there any tracking on this at all? Add to that the 40,000 students who live in Connecticut and that is over 200,000 students. Even if only half attend this fall - that's 100,000 young adults gathering and living in close quarters in our tiny state. What is our viral case load going to be 21 days from now? Just as we are asking our children, teachers, and staff to enter our school buildings? Also since we are a commuter town, simple math dictates that transmission will rise exponentially when students go back to college in New York. According to the most recent data (2019-2020) - there are 594,000 university students in the city. What is the publicly available data of those students coming from states that are on the Travel Ban list? We should focus on making work what we know we can do safely. Distance learning wasn't perfect. It was a new experience - frustrating for everyone. But we can learn from the spring and improve the model. It

		will not be perfect, but it will be preferable to the uncertainty and upheaval we will be facing if the case numbers significantly rise in September, forcing school closures. Thanks so much for being able to share our thoughts.
Sarah Bell	Bedford teacher	Has there been any discussion of having dedicated teaching staff for the middle school students who will chose distance learning? Thank you.
Tami Benanav	11 Poplar Plains Rd	If the school day doesn't end at 1:10, but at 3pm, would extra curricular activities start at 1:10 or at 3 pm? If it's 1:10, then those minutes aren't available for students that participate in certain activities. If it is 3pm, will students need to go home at 1:10 pm and return at 3pm?
Michelle Benner	61 Hillspoint Road	Will Bedford and Staples be recording the live streamed classes? If a student who is remote learning has a computer issue during a live class, it would be helpful to have a recording of the class to refer back to so they don't miss out on any of the lesson. Thank you all for your tremendous and continuing work on these plans. We are so thankful and feel lucky to live in a town with such outstanding, thoughtful leaders to help navigate our way though this. Thank you.
Harris Falk	Overlook Road	Will the classes in middle and high school be recorded and made available for later viewing for any students who are not able to connect (poor internet, illness, etc.) to the class when it originally streams?
Gery Grove	20 Crooked Mile Road	Regarding Jeannie's comment about those who opt into distance only learning. This should not be a choice people are forced to make because they don't believe the specific scenario (e.g. ALL students at BMS) is unsafe. Also. For families who span several grades and ages. It would be good to be able to select schooling on different days depending on the schools attended - e.g. M/W/F for elementary school children of that family and T/Th for middle school children of that family. It is very hard to have three children at home on the same days for some families and attend to all of their needs at once or have a person working there as well.

2. **Enrollment Report** - No public comment responses were received during the live meeting. One test response was received.

DISCUSSION/ACTION

1. **Approval of Technology Purchases** - Public comments are posted exactly as received.

Ben Frimmer	Theatre Educator	Can you discuss how microphones will be disinfected when shared between teachers or is the plan to purchase a microphone for each teacher as you do with laptops.

Adrian curtis	4 heritage ct	Can we get a breakdown of the tech expense? It sounded like it was roughly 1500$ a classroom? Were other vendors consulted? How different were the quotes?
Harris Falk	Overlook Road	Some of these have already been answered: Is one month enough time to install the cameras in SHS and BMS? Do the 173 internet cameras include CMS? Will more cameras need to be installed in CMS? Are those cameras included in the CMS rebuilding budget? I presume when CMS opens BMS won't need all of those cameras, are they easy enough to relocate them to CMS over a weekend? Also, when this crisis passes the cameras could be used for in class presentations/interactions from around the world.
Amy Herrera	3 Sandhopper Trail	If elementary students who opt out are having distance learning delivered at the district level can the Coleytown middle students have their distance delivered through Bedford livestream? Is it worth Allocating critical dollars equipping both middle schools With livestream technology during this Particular school year where we have so much added expense?
Laurel Syah	12 Cranbury Rd	Do the cameras move in response to speakers in the room, meaning will they show students in the room speaking? Will distance learners be visible on the smart board or other large screen for the in person students to see? Could the rooms be mic'ed so the teachers don't need to repeat student questions? All would help ensure equity and streamline multi-modal participation.
Amy Herrera	3 sandhopper Trail	Please disregard my prior comment. I was failing to consider the importance of the livestream in the event Coleytown needs to move to hybrid.

2. **Purchase of Plexiglass Desktop Dividers** - No public comment responses were received during the live meeting. One test response was received.