

Mount Greylock Regional School District School Committee

Special Session

Location: Zoom Remote Meeting

Date: Wednesday, March 31, 2021 Time: 6:00pm

Present: Julia Bowen, Christina Conry, Jose Constantine, Curtis Elfenbein, Carrie Greene, Michelle Johnson, Steve Miller

Also present: Jason McCandless, Joe Bergeron

Special Open Session Agenda

I. Call to order

II. MISSION: At Mount Greylock Regional School District, our mission is to create a community of learners working together in a safe and challenging learning environment that encourages restorative-based processes, respect, inclusive diversity, courtesy, integrity, and responsibility through high expectations and cooperation resulting in life-long learning and personal growth.

III. Public Comment

IV. Policy related to Covid-19 and Student Travel VOTE

V. Policy related to Covid-19 and Athletic/Extracurricular Participation VOTE

VI. Motion to adjourn

MINUTES:

I. Call to order
6:00pm

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III. Public Comment
None

IV. Policy related to Covid-19 and Student Travel VOTE

EBCFB- Interim Policy for Student Travel during Covid (end date TBD)

For families who travel out of Massachusetts for more than a 24-hour time span, the Mount Greylock Regional School District will have three requirements for returning to in person learning:

- Produce a negative test center/physician's office administered PCR (polymerase chain reaction) COVID-19 test taken 5 days or later after returning to Massachusetts **and**
- Complete a 7 day quarantine period (potential return to school on day 8) **and**
- Exhibit no COVID-19 related symptoms prior to reentry.

If a family chooses not to have their child tested for COVID after traveling outside of the state for more than 24 hours, then the mandatory quarantine period will be 10 days.

Travel outside of the state for less than 24 hours does not require a quarantine period.

Jake: Getting kids back, keeping them in, keeping people safe. This is the reason why we bring these policies. Think one will be straightforward, other have had many conversations. Bringing forward as interim (temporary) policies, can and will go away when we deem it appropriate (school committee deems appropriate). Could be labeled as guidance, which is a step down from policy. Opted to bring forward as a policy not to be punitive, not to cause harm, not to single folks out, not to jam anyone up, but really trying to keep laser-like focus on getting people back, keeping them back, keeping people healthy.

Have access to CDC and state guidance, can share. The designation says that it goes in temporarily in the policy manual. Going in the same section as covid policies.

CDC:

Travel During COVID-19

Updated Feb. 16, 2021 Languages ▾ Print

What you need to know

Travel increases your chance of spreading and getting COVID-19. Delay travel and stay home to protect yourself and others from COVID-19, even if you are vaccinated.

If you **must** travel, take steps to protect yourself and others:

- If you are eligible, get fully vaccinated for COVID-19.
- Before you travel, get tested with a viral test 1-3 days before your trip.
- Wear a mask over your nose and mouth when in public.
- Avoid crowds and stay at least 6 feet/2 meters (about 2 arm lengths) from anyone who did not travel with you.
- Get tested 3-5 days after your trip and stay home and self-quarantine for a full 7 days after travel, even if your test is negative. If you don't get tested, stay home and self-quarantine for 10 days after travel.
- Follow all [state and local](#) recommendations or requirements after travel.

On This Page

[Before You Consider Traveling](#)

[If You Must Travel](#)

[Check Travel Restrictions](#)

[After You Travel](#)

[Considerations for Types of Travel](#)

[Tips to avoid getting and spreading COVID-19 in common travel situations](#)

Travel Requirements

All air passengers coming to the United States, including U.S. citizens, are **required** to have a negative COVID-19 test result or documentation of recovery from COVID-19 before they board a flight to the United States. See the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more information.

Masks are required on planes, buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation traveling into, within, or out of the United States and in U.S. transportation hubs such as airports and stations.

Difference between us and the CDC: there recommendations are 3-5 days after the trip, stay home and quarantine for a full 7 days. We did not go 3-5 days as that would be negated by the 7 day quarantine period (even if test comes back negative). Tests are more accurate after more time. Current guidance from MA:

As of Monday, March 22, all visitors entering Massachusetts, including returning residents, are advised to quarantine for 10 days upon their arrival. Travelers in the following categories are exempt from this quarantine advisory:

- Travelers who have received a negative COVID-19 result on a test administered not more than 72 hours prior to their arrival in Massachusetts. Travelers may also test out of the quarantine advisory after arrival in Massachusetts, as long as they quarantine until receiving a negative test result.
- Anyone who is entering Massachusetts for fewer than 24 hours
- Anyone who is returning to Massachusetts after being out of the State for fewer than 24 hours
- Workers who enter Massachusetts to perform critical infrastructure functions (as [specified by](#) the Federal Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency) during required commuting to or from work and while at work.
- Travelers who are [fully vaccinated](#) (i.e. who have received two doses of either the Moderna or Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines OR who have received a single dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, 14 days or more ago) and who do not have symptoms.

All travelers are encouraged to consult and follow the [CDC's guidelines and requirements for travel](#).

Our reasoning: keep myopic set of eyes on getting kids back to school, that will stick, keep people safe.

Carrie moves to accept interim policy EBCFB, Steve seconds.

Michelle: why are we not following the MA guidelines? I have some concerns about kids being out of school longer than need be. What happens to WES/LES kids who are in quarantine, what happens to them?

Jake: We agree, not interested in seeing students out any more than have been already. We felt the stakes were high enough with elementary coming back, middle getting ready to come back, spring break, have all these coming together, educational staffs not fully vaccinated (about 50% not by start of break), we felt that the state has taken away things that are advisory / binding / things with teeth, and giving guidance. For the second question: in case of quarantine the fallback is like thru any time of school when absent for many days for kids to get work to do at home. Will not have teachers teaching a few kids remotely by

zoom. The remote academy is a different program. Students will not bounce in and out. Not ideal, but think more ideal than asking teachers to have 15-20 elementary school students and almost all in person and a few by zoom.

Carrie: Two of the points raised from community input: wondering if the group that workshopped this took into account these points, such as the impact on athletes from the made up season going on now (if choose to travel lose that last week of the season), other feedback around seniors who might be traveling to look at colleges and this is the one chance to do so before deciding in May. Were these taken into consideration? What is your response to these?

Jake: Several letters from thoughtful parents. Athletic piece important. We are concerned about students ability to travel to perhaps 3-4 states so can physically step on to the campus might be their first chance to get a real feel before investing tens of thousands of dollars for their freshman year. Do not have a date yet for when seniors return. Aspirational date May 8th. I see the greater good of this as being perhaps worth the angst that it is going to cause with some families that have committed to travel. Can adopt as guidance not as policy. Want people to know mean business about safety. Will not collect Facebook / Instagram feeds to see. In most basic sense serves as a reminder that we are close but not there yet.

Steve: I would accept as a friendly amendment moving to guideline / suggestion, important to take into account what kind of travel and activities. Are we talking about vaccinated grandparents seeing kids and that's it, not going out to restaurants when traveling? Going to Boston vs going to New Canaan or Bennington.... When everyone is back remember kids are playing sports with masks -- it's not just one item in our protection plan: abundance of safety concerns.

Julia: did you talk to local health officials? What other guidance?

Jake: Local health cannot enact, school committees can. Suggest language is supported by local boards of health, did share with health inspector and members of the health board. Did not receive any negative commentary from people shared. Shared with two physicians who are advising. One says does not go far enough, wish we could stretch all of these requirements a bit longer: please don't travel. One felt very comfortable with. Do not want to speak for another town board. Will say did share with local authorities.

Julia: Torn, evidence is no community spread when follow strategies of hand washing, social distancing. Belt and suspenders moment: if adding suspenders or second set of suspenders, as have pool testing, if adding that were at no cost then all for it, but really struck by the impact of what is school, it is the entire experience, struck by the impact this can have on kids around critical elements of their experience.

Christina: Even though we have the amazing pool testing program, not all kids are doing that.

Julia: Appreciate and understand, we have the belts as we have the mitigating steps, have the pool testing, maybe need to be in pool testing for this if coming back.

Jose: serves as reminder, guidance has no teeth, no clauses with penalties.

Jose: hope if policy then more families will follow then if guideline?

Jake: important message to community.

Carrie: tricky. Want to get a message across. don't want to tell families to change plans, some say no travel, some say ok as people vaccinated, don't want to tell people they did the wrong thing. Like the idea of do as guidance. Wrong time to have as policy but not enforce

Julia: understand tricky position, shouldn't have policies don't enforce. Strong signal to community to follow.

Michelle: Agree bad to make policy and not enforce. Concerned about timing: if plan to travel in April have to buy tickets early, expensive; many families have plans. Concerned about impact on sports kids, whole year has been turned upside down. High school kids won't talk about what did, elementary might. Putting people in a tough position: where did you go?

Joe: of the 15 cases in March, the most common contact tracing reason goes back to travel of some sort. The entire school year, when people talk about the prevalence so low in Berkshire county why are we not in person? Keep it low by not traveling. If make the choice to travel you are implicitly and explicitly prioritizing that. That's ok, consequence is not a failing grade, not marked absent more than would be otherwise, it is that you need to spend those five days at the end of the weekend studying remotely. At the middle/high school: might be inconvenient but continuity. Given the fact that we have limited tools, this can be one of them. Have sent email after email encouraging people not to travel. This is not congrats back in, it is we have 3 months to do the best to protect the community. I understand the sentiment that this is restrictive, but given the cases we have seen and reasons, and all year long have been saying do not travel, and CDC cannot put a travel ban but have used strongest wording can: do not travel unless need to. Can protect community a bit more. Consequence is that if we realize you have traveled we will enforce the quarantine period and take the test. Understand concerns, but health of community.

Carrie: If can channel the sentiment of the group that worked on these: is the hope that families who have made plans will cancel?

Jake: If made plans more than 2 weeks ago this was before Governor changed. I would say flummoxed that traveling during a pandemic while trying to get kids back. If made plans more than 2 weeks ago did with knowledge going against what state health recommends, there are tradeoffs. You get to go on a trip, see people need/want to see, but the tradeoff

here is stay home until have irrefutable proof that not going to endanger fellow students, staff members, Say this with the utmost respect, know it feels like over-reach, being focused on we need / want school in person for the real good of kids.... I don't feel this is asking too much of some individual families.

Joe: I understand senior prioritizing visiting college and then being remote for five days. Support visiting a grandparent before they pass away; would do with my kids, have considered doing that with our kids. But the consequence is not overly punitive, asking to also prioritize health and safety of community.

Jose: Appreciate articulation. Want to address slight discrepancy in what we have heard today on enforcement. If district finds a child / family has left for more than 24 hours: will then be forced to go to quarantine. So clear consequences, distinguishes policy from guidance. Do we need to have this explicit.

Jake: We can enforce a quarantine, feel strongly, no personal stake, professional / good of the community. I do not know that absent state law, absent federal law, absent regulations from select board, health board,: I do not know if this is enforceable. I would stand by we are asking our friends and neighbors to do the right thing.

Joe: Language in draft policy says requirements for in person learning, think that is as strong as need be. What happens if we realize someone has traveled? Principal or nurse calls the family, says policy is request you complete the quarantine. If says no, reality is may not have any real recourse, but it gives the principals and nurses the ability to say these are the expectations. Understand both sides of the coin.

Carrie: Would you say it is easier for the athletic director to enforce as a policy?

Steve: I understand the concerns raised, but I worry about the emotional health and this is a one size fits all, takes driving across the border to visit vaccinated grandparents.... I like strong guidelines, needing a negative test to return

Curtis: We already have a policy where to attend you have to fill out a health screener, if not call home, with the assumption that form is filled out honestly. Have seen that this is not always the case. There is an element of trust that we are placing in the community to do the right thing. Fan of numbers: 42 positive cases in MtG / other schools nearby in the last 14 days, that is 3 a day, an astronomical increase. Now those positives limited to students, staff, bus drivers.... In the midst of a surge. We are at November number of positives, new data tomorrow, JLMC going to meet, could be in a situation where we might go remote but have to call snow days. All because of a date picked on a calendar. When I say I don't care what I mean is I do care, but the enemy is us: we are in the midst of an incredible spike in Berkshire county, we are now red. It is the fact that the portion that is showing up in school portion.... I fully support this as an order to our community, I would be astonished if open next week given where the numbers are going. This is so many steps down the road from

what I see as incredibly important next 24 hours, that to me doesn't matter. To me common sense: would be willing to modify it to travel by flight.... If flying going through multiple airports.

Julia: Thank you Curtis, Joe. Questions in my head: is this difference b/w guidelines vs policy: how many students are we talking about? Conversation here is are we going to allow the need for a week of participation for a small set of students to potentially put an entire community at risk? Talking about those who want to travel and not want to quarantine. I know some of the kids who had covid recently and were already quarantining; there are families being super careful. Very small set of people. I come back to the struggle of having a policy – if a policy want there to be an enforcement.

Jake: Can be a big impact for some of the families. The real enforcement mechanism is the principal says please do not send child to school. Hard to know what the numbers will be, one more shade of grey in months of grey. Making as strong of a statement as we can about the expectations of our people to do the right thing; not sure if it is policy, guideline or begging.

Michelle: I did not know that the positives from pooled testing were from travel, a lot more comfortable with this now.

Jake: Not necessarily the student who traveled, but to someone who traveled.

Carrie: Important to separate policy from procedure, consequences are procedure, typically not included there.

Jake: Our failing administratively that we did not flesh out a procedures document; this was a responsive interim policy to something coming up. Really hoping that even this, which is serious and grave, even this does not come to the level of crime and punishment, seen for the spirit it is intended: asking people to think of community.

Curtis: Disproportionate how the socio-economic status leads to who can travel.

Steve: Understand both sides and the terrible balancing act of the different costs each option has on our community. I still prefer guideline to policy, but I really like the idea of distinguishing between cars and planes, big difference between driving straight to a grandparents house.

Carrie: I reject amendment to make it guidance. As for amendment Steve do you have one for travel?

Steve: Add flight.

Michelle: not comfortable amending it as then have a laundry list of variables on what is allowed – can you drive to Florida? Are you able to stop and use a bathroom? Not comfortable with an amendment on flying.

Carrie: Call the vote:

Bowen aye, Conry Aye, Constantine Aye, Elfenbein, aye, Greene Aye , Johnson aye, Miller no. Motion passes 6-1.

V. Policy related to Covid-19 and Athletic/Extracurricular Participation VOTE

EBCFC- Interim Policy for Athletic/Extracurricular Participation during Covid (end date TBD)

Any and all students, including homeschooled and remote-learning students, who participate in school supported junior varsity and varsity athletics, or who participate in any in-person after school extra-curricular or co-curricular activity including drama and clubs must participate in the school's weekly pooled testing program.

Again end date to be determined. Governor announced earlier this week that state will pay for pooled testing for the remainder of the year (original sunset was April 18th, we had a plan to fund but now state is fully funding, very grateful). Currently 76-77% of Fall II Season athletes are participating. If adopt as of Monday April 5th will require athletics (only thing really happening in person) to participate. Around a dozen students who are participating and not being tested. Have about 80% of entire student body, including remote, participating in pooled testing, will reach out to families that are not and ask them to consider. Why would home school be listed in policy? Elsewhere in policy manual do list that home school can participate in athletics and extra-curriculars.

Motion to adopt EBCFC: Carrie moves, Steve seconds.

Julia: Are there students for whom the covid testing will exclude?

Jake: There are situations where we would certainly meet with a family and make a one-on-one decision on a very specific set of circumstances.

Bowen aye, Conry Aye, Constantine Aye, Elfenbein, aye, Greene Aye , Johnson aye, Miller Aye. Motion passes unanimously.

VI. Motion to adjourn:

Michelle moves, Curtis seconds.

Bowen aye, Conry Aye, Constantine Aye, Elfenbein, aye, Greene Aye , Johnson aye, Miller Aye. Motion passes unanimously.

Minutes by Steven Miller, Secretary.

Approved 4.8.21