Bourne Public Schools

BOURNE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting Minutes

DATE: Wednesday, August 25, 2021
TIME: 6:30 PM
PLACE: Remote Access Meeting

ATTENDANCE

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Emily Berry; Paul McMaster; Erin Perry; Steven Strojny; Maureen Fuller; Ryan Bagdonas; Kari MacRae; Student Representative Viveca Stucke

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

OTHER ATTENDEES PRESENT: Dr. Kerri Anne Quinlan-Zhou, Superintendent; Dr. Barbara Starkie, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Jordan Geist, Director of Business Services; Dr. Ryan Place, Director of Special Education and Student Services

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Emily Berry calls the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

2. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

All stand for the Pledge of Allegiance

3. PUBLIC INPUT

Chair Emily Berry reminds everyone that a public comment can be made via Zoom and is limited to three minutes. It is requested that you include your full name and where you reside in the chat feature before your statement will be recognized. Thirty minutes has been alotted for all public comments this evening. School Committee members will not be able to answer questions, engage in conversation and/or reply to a comment.

- Bourne resident Vanesssa Williams is the first parent to comment. Ms. Williams has a four year old that attends the Pre-School program at Bournedale Elementary School. She states that her child has specific disabilities and that she has seen improvement in the child's verbal skills. She is concerned that with the mask mandate her child may not be able to sound out words or to see the teacher sound out words. She feels that with the mask manate, her child may not develop as well with the mandate in place. Chair Berry asks Ms. Williams to reach out with her concerns to Superintendent Zhou.
- Shawna Shanahan is the next speaker and a resident of Bourne. Ms. Shanahan reads a statement. She believes that the mask mandate that is in place is tyrannical, unethical, unlawful and violates civil liberty. She opposes this mandate and is advocating for a parent to choose whether to wear one or not. Ms. Shanahan asks each and everyone whether they will take responsibility and liability if her student is affected by the use of masks and until that answer is a yes, "you can not force him to wear a mask".

- Ms. Shanahan child's, Marcus Wesley, next reads his statement.
- Mary Marquebreuck, Bourne resident, states that masks are not needed and are experimental on our children. Ms. Marquebreuck asks what is the point in having our children restricted of breath? Why are we putting children in fear of the "big bad virus"? She then talks about the Covid-19 vaccines and some controversial information available to the public on both issues.
- Teacher Anne Marie Strode makes the next statement but this recorder can not hear or understand her words.
- Meredith Dinon states that she would like to echo some of what the other parents that have said tonight. She has six children in the system and two are now being homeschooled because of the mask mandate. Ms. Dinon states that she wishes that the schools did not require masks and left this decision to the parents.
- Kyle Shanahan believes that once masks are on we know that they will not be coming off and is concerned about children's mental health as a result. He states that he knows they can't answer this question but asks, "what science is being looked at to determine the long term affects of mask wearing?"

4. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

a. Superintendent's Report

- Dr. Zhou begins by thanking everyone that voiced their opinions tonight and especially the young man who spoke. She plans to respond to the comments and incorporate this in the protocols and procedures that she will be discussing this evening. She responds to Mr. Shanahan and states that she does not expect this to go on forever, that the expectation was to begin the school year unmasked.

- Presentation on COVID protocols and procedures: Dr. Zhou states that these plans were developed in consulation with the Admin Team and through many conversations with medical experts. Kerri talks about the recommendations made by our BPS pediatric physican, the Bourne Health Administrator Terri Guarino, the MA Department of Education and with local Superintendents.
- Dr. Zhou talks about how quarantine guidelines will look different this year. She notes the specific procedures for both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals. The plan includes air quality measures and the recommendation of spacing/distancing of three feet at lunch.
- The three available testing methods are presented and explained. It is important to note that parental consent is required for all testing. Kerri states that if a child presents with symptoms at the nurses' office and permission has been given by the parent/caregiver a test would be administered and results would be known right away.
- The masking guidance from the Commissioner of Education is discussed. All public schools in Massachusetts must follow the guidelines outlined in the Commissioner's memo of August 25, 2021. Masks are mandated effective immediately and at least until October 1, 2021. Schools will need to show that 80% of the population is vaccinated in order to lift the mandate after October 1st.
- Dr. Zhou talks about the proposed School Committee policy – EBCFA which will need to be voted on this evening.

    - Chair Berry asks if quarantine guidelines are from the State or from our district. Dr. Zhou states that the quarantine guidelines are a state mandate.
    - Emily gives an example of students in a group who are all unmasked and if one tests positive does that mean they all must quarantine. The answer is yes because they were unmasked. Kerri states that there would not be remote learning available for these students since the Commissioner has put that guidance in place. For clarification, if those same students are masked and one tests positive, they will not be required to quantine because it is not considered a close contact.
    - Maureen Fuller would like to hear more about the test and stay. Kerri states that the parental consent is a signed form. Dr. Place states that the consent forms will be sent out shortly. She asks if a call is made to the parent once results are received. Dr. Place states that parents will receive a digital response of the results. Kerri reinterates that these guidelines are coming directly from the State.

- Kari MacRae asks if you are not vaccinated, using a mask, and get COVID do you still have to quarantine for 7 or 14 days? Dr. Zhou states that it is very similar to the previous guidance. Dr. Place reads the guidance from the DESE and states that it is 10 days of quarantining.
- Kari asks if the Policy being voted on this evening is the replacement policy to when the mask mandate is lifted? Dr. Zhou states that it is a paralell policy. There are a few things that are different and will be discussed later this evening.
- Ryan Bagdonas is concerned of the Middle School reaching the 80% threshhold as the 6th graders are not eligible for the vaccine. Can this be waived if the school reaches the 80% minus the 6th graders? Dr. Zhou is unsure of the answer as she knows only the Commissioner can make the call. Kerri also talks about the news that vaccines may be available for younger students.

- Dr. Zhou continues the presentation to talk about the new policy. She states that this is a local policy unlike the State or even Federal policies. The School Committee can approve, rescind and even revise policies. Kerri discusses the COVID and vaccination rates in Bourne. She reads all sections of the policy and gives more information on each.

  - Emily Berry states they made some tweaks and changes to the policy. It was decided that we would use our town's metrics to continue masking.
  - Paul McMaster asks for clarification of the State policy regarding 80% vaccine rate and masking. Does this mean that staff and students in a school can go unmasked? Will they mandate that those that are not vaccinated wear a mask? Dr. Zhou states that she would guess that they will state it is optional to wear a mask if you are vaccinated.
  - Kari MacRae asks if we can put in our policy that states if at 80% wouldn't it be reasonable to say when vaccinated are not wearing a mask that the unvaccinated should not have to wear a mask? Dr. Zhou tells her that those options were discussed at Roundtables and states that some of that should be under discussion. Kari talks about pool testing as someone had brought that up to her. Dr. Place explains the procedure for when one in the group is positive.
  - Kari asks how would we handle a situation of a student struggling to breathe and takes their mask off, and we don't want them to leave the classroom? What is the protocol for that? Dr. Zhou says that this would be handled on a case by case basis.
  - Kari asks about the word "periodically" and how that works. Chair Berry states that this topic will be on the SC Agenda every meeting.
  - Steven Strogny would like Dr. Zhou to walk through a situation where a student doesn't want to wear a mask. She states that she hopes that this doesn't require discipline. The staff will do what they can to assist a student both special or general education along with talking to them about the district's policy on masking. Steven talks more about the discipline aspect of this issue and asks the Administration to look into other alternatives for whether a student is to mask up. He states that he will be voting no on this policy because he doesn't like it.
  - Chair Berry gives her opinion on this issue in regards to the masking policy.
  - Kari MacRae states that she will also vote no on the policy for the parents and students that are against mask wearing.
  - Paul McMaster respects everyone's opinions but what no one is talking about is the fact that this is a deadly virus. He states that he has lost his parents to COVID within the last 4 months. He states his position on the issue of mask wearing.
  - Erin Perry states that she agrees with everything Paul said. She has a young child at home that can not go back to remote learning. If wearing a mask keeps her child in school then she will approve this policy.
  - Emily asks if one already has had COVID and has antibodies, are they waived from quarantining? Dr. Zhou doesn't have an answer at this time and hopes to have more information at the next meeting.
  - Kerri responds to a question on the chat that asks where are we getting our vaccine rates from. She states that our school nurses have access to the rates via the state databases.
  - Kerri answers a couple more questions that are in the chat.

- Dr. Place clarifies the question on having had COVID and quarantining. He says that the only exemption for testing and quarantining is they would not be considered a close contact after the first 90 days of a positive test.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Dr. Zhou thanks everyone for coming out this evening for the respecful dialogue tonight especially as it they are not easy topics.

6. ACTION ITEMS

Erin Perry motions to approve Policy EBCFA; Seconded by Paul McMaster; Roll call vote 5-2-0

7. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Future agenda items are noted on the Agenda.

8. STEVEN STROJNY MOTIONS TO ADJOURN; SECONDED BY PAUL MCMASTER; 7-0-0

Meeting ended at 8:30 PM

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,
Teresa Vicente
Recording Secretary

List of documents and exhibits used (GL c.30A, sect 22(a))

Agenda Item	Document
	School Committee Meeting Agenda
4a	Superintendent's Update
4a	Vaccination Rate
4a	DESE Implementation of Mask Requirement
4a	Copy of EBCFA Policy