

MATTAPOISETT SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MATTAPOISETT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEET
October 22, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.
MEETING HELD REMOTELY THROUGH ZOOM
Mattapoisett, MA 02738

Members Present: James Muse, Carole Clifford, Shannon Finning, Carly Lavin and Karin Barrows.

Members Absent: NONE

Others Present: Michael S. Nelson, Superintendent of Schools, Diana Russo, Administrative Asst. to the Supt, Rosemary Bowman, Principal, Mattapoisett Public Schools, Kevin Tavares, Associate Principal, Mattapoisett Public Schools, Member of the Leadership Team, teachers, staff, parents and members of press.

Meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. by Chairperson Muse. Mr. Muse expressed he was very grateful to the various stakeholders, and all the interested parties who are here to help the school district proceed through these very trying times. Mr. Muse expressed that he hopes that everyone is able to share information for the good of the order, and to better our school district, he hopes the conversation can be civil and respectful. Mr. Muse stated that per MGL for a public meeting the following is stated: *No person shall address a meeting of a public body without permission of the chair, and all persons shall, at the request of the chair, be silent. No person shall disrupt the proceedings of a meeting of a public body.*

Mr. Muse stated the following rules will be followed:

1. Public Comment shall be for a period of 20 minutes and shall generally follow the opening of the meeting. The Committee reserves the right to rearrange its agenda to accommodate scheduled presenters.
2. Any citizen wishing to speak before the Committee shall identify themselves by name and address and shall speak for no longer than 3 minutes. No citizen may speak more than once without permission of the Chair. All citizens shall speak to the full Committee through the Chair and shall not address individual members or administrators.
3. Individuals may address topics on the agenda, items specified for public comment, or items within the scope of responsibility of the School Committee. The Chair shall rule out of order any individual who fails to honor the guidelines or who addresses a matter inappropriate for public comment.
4. Any Committee member may direct questions to the speaker through the Chair in order to clarify comments of the speaker.

Ms. Russo will call their name, and each person will have 3 minutes to speak. Mr. Muse explained that when the speaker has 1 minute remaining Ms. Russo will hold up a "1 minute remaining" sign.

Mr. Muse explained that he would open the meeting with the OPEN COMMENTS section. He also expressed that the administration and the school committee members would also have a chance to speak during the general section of the meeting.

OPEN COMMENTS

Tiffany Reedy:

Ms. Reedy expressed that she is incredibly impressed how Center School has handled the pandemic, notifying families, the pick-up and drop-off has been incredibly smooth, and I feel safe and

comfortable sending my child to school each day, I joined this meeting because I think it's important, Ms. Reedy expressed that she is a nurse practitioner, she has a dual specialty in adult medicine and psychiatry across the lifespan and since the pandemic hit I have increasingly been made aware of the social emotional impact that this pandemic has had on our children, each day it seems I'm getting more and more calls to treat children both in our community and outside of our community for anxiety disorders for depression disorders, and some of these children have never experienced anxiety and depression in the past, panic stricken parents are reaching out to me on a daily basis to address the social emotional needs of their children and asking how can I help, what can they do to help, children are struggling in school, parents have fears that their child is going to be left behind. Ms. Reedy expressed that both private and parochial schools are currently full time, so how does that affect our counterparts or peers who are now in a hybrid model, are we widening the gap between the haves and have nots, another concern I have, she expressed she hates to say this because schools should not be responsible for the 24/7 feeding and keeping our children safe, but for those children who do rely on school for nutrition and safety, how are we managing that. Ms. Reedy expressed that her concern is that the mortality rate of the population is minimal, however the social emotional affects it's having on our youth is great, and she expressed that's why she's advocating for going back full time.

Stephanie Clark made the following statement:

Thank you for calling this interim meeting so that we could have a productive conversation about the current state of hybrid learning. As a collective group of over 100 parents/caregivers/guardians that came together to express their concerns under the hybrid plan, specifically recovery of lost learning from the last school year, ability to meet current grade level standards under the hybrid model, as well as the unsustainable burden to a majority of families to implement at home learning, specifically financial hardships and out-of-pocket expenses.

After being in the hybrid model for over 5 weeks, these issues are not being remedied by time, and feels that this is getting worse. We come to you for an open discussion because we see our children not progressing, and we need to be provided a concrete plan for the near future.

Given Mattapoissett's low transmission rate throughout the pandemic, we should be following Governor Baker's advice that school districts in this low risk status should be back in school full time. Recent articles from Brown and Harvard professors both strongly recommend children in low risk communities should be back at school full time due to schools not presenting as centers for spreading the coronavirus. Dr. Joseph Allen, a Harvard Chan School of Public Health associate professor of exposure science, 'when the metrics are met, as they have been in Massachusetts, but schools in some districts stay closed, I think that's a problem. If they don't open when community spread is low...when will they open? The fact is the emotional, social, nutritional and safety risks are far greater to children not in school than any risks the virus has to them in school full-time.'

Why don't we have a plan? Why hasn't it been published yet? How can other communities adjacent to ours go full time in person without issue? What metrics and data are they using as guidance and why aren't we? We've never been told the specific reasons why we can't do this. If there is an issue with square footage or ventilation, show us this data so we can work together for a solution.

My question to every member of the school committee is why are YOU not asking any of these questions? This your job. You are the keepers of our children and you're not doing it. I urge you to step up and ask the tough questions or step aside.

We want what we have come for today, we want the reopening plan with guidance and metrics to be published and reviewed. We have parents in our community that are experts in public safety and health that would like to speak, and ask that they be given the opportunity, so that the committee can take definitive actions today on how to have an actionable way forward to getting our children back to school full time. Thank you.

Sara Jacobsen

Ms. Jacobsen expressed that she is a Mattapoissett resident, 6th grade teacher at Old Hammondtown School and Co-President of the Mattapoissett Educators Association. Ms. Jacobsen acknowledged that every participant in hybrid learning is feeling a great level of frustration, the teachers, the students, the administrators, the school committee and the superintendent, and she expressed that the reason were here is because we all care about the children in this town, and this is hard to bare, teaching in a hybrid model is hard for us, because if flies in the face of one of the most basic needs of human engagement, and the is the desire and need to be effective in your work, we know this is not school at its most effective, but we also know this is not school at its least effective, which is what we experience in the spring, she expressed they are desperate to preserve in person contact with our students and our ability to bring our classes together for those two days each week during what is shaping up to be a long winter hinges on our capacity to keep them 6 feet apart. She expressed that the in-person days are vibrant, productive, enjoyable, joyful, way more joyful than we imagined at the beginning of this, but it doesn't obscure the reality that we don't have the staffing available to bring every child in at a distance of 6 feet. She expressed that if the children aren't placed 6 feet apart then we would need to quarantine entire classrooms of children and staff for 14 days whenever that room has a positive case, she expressed quarantining doesn't just mean remote learning, it means you can't leave your house for those 14 days. She expressed that members of our community have all chosen different risk tolerances, some are very cautions, while others have been willing to accept a little more risk to preserve some sense of normalcy, that's each individual's choice to make, however when we have children spaced closer we are choosing to put them at risk. She expressed that when it comes to COVID the data is a weapon that's been used in every debate by all sides, it can be used to make a range of arguments, she expressed that we don't have enough data about the long term effects of COVID, it's too new, it's unknown and asking people to accept that unknown risk is a lot, especially knowing that Mattapoissett just became a "RED" community about an hour ago. She expressed that the MEA is asking the administration to examine the feasibility of bringing back our youngest learners, students who are just learning to read, and making the investment to bringing them back 6 feet apart to make our safe and sustainable, she expressed we want the children back but in a way that it can keep us all safe.

Frances Kearns

Ms. Kearns expressed her gratitude to the administration and staff of the schools for all the efforts they have put in place for the last 5 weeks, she expressed she understands it has been very challenging, she expressed that she is a parent of two elementary aged children and she elected to have her children participate in full remote learning model, and she wanted to give her perspective, she expressed that her children have thrived under this model, their reading has improved, their math scores have improved, she expressed that her understanding of the work that the children are undertaking and my ability to assist them has been advantageous for me and for them. Ms. Kearns expressed that in terms of risk for her family, they had some issues and the risk presented more risk than they could accept. She expressed that remote learning has its advantages and there are families under that model that are thriving and she thanked everyone for making that model available.

Nicole Klein

Ms. Klein thanked the Chairperson for the opportunity to speak and she also thanked Ms. Kearns for sharing her experience on remote learning, she expressed that as a collective the group of parents that say the hybrid model is not working but no means do we want the remote option to be taken away, she expressed that there are individuals who have the need to make those decisions in the best interest of their families. However this group would like to see that data, she expressed that the parents have never been presented with the square footage is, are these metrics that can or can't be achieved, this is information that we have not had access to, and as parents we would like to have all the information, before there are assertions being made that it can't be done, while we appreciate what Sara Jacobsen is saying we just need to see that data and metrics to understand the situation,

because otherwise they just become assertions of opinion not necessarily fact. Ms. Klein asked if she could give the remainder of her time to the Grossmans who are two medical doctors and they are trying to raise awareness and they have a collection of data.

Dr. Michael Grossman

Dr. Grossman expressed that him and his wife are both physicians. He explained that he has 28 years in trauma and critical care, he expressed he's working on putting together the trauma center at St. Lukes Hospital. First and foremost, Dr. Grossman expressed that this is one of the most wonderful communities that he's ever lived in, he expressed it's a great town, he expressed that they are incredibly pleased with the school. Dr. Grossman expressed he joined the meeting to present objective data about the COVID-19 virus, he expressed that this data is available to anyone, it's on the CDC website, he expressed they post COVID data weekly since January, he expressed this is the real data it's not CNN and it's not FOX. He expressed this data is a description of public health risk, in patients 0 to 4 in the united stated there have been 100,000 or .1% of the population the overall risk of mortality in that age group is .003% and the survival rate is 99.96%, Dr. Grossman expressed to summarize the data, the aggregate risk of death and survival for the following age groups for a country that has tested a third of its population, for ages 5 to 17, the mortality rate is .014% the survival rate is 99.9%, ages 18 to 29 the mortality rate is .05% the survival rate is 99.8%, ages 30 to 39 the mortality rate is .02% the survival rate is 98.9%, the aggregate mortality rate for all patients under the age of 75 is under 5% and the survival rate is 92.8%. Dr. Grossman expressed that the risk of the virus killing you is exceptionally low, the risk of it making you very sick is exceptionally low.

Kearney Klein

Mr. Klein expressed that he appreciates the efforts everyone is making in the hybrid model, however he expressed he is supportive of children returning to school full in person and would like to see the metrics and plan to address that. Mr. Klein expressed that if Dr. Grossmans' comments are correct than the flu is more deadly than this virus for our children's' age group. Mr. Klein suggested that our plans should be based on science and facts.

Aline Graves

Ms. Graves expressed that she is concerned if children come back full in-person and not 6 feet apart that we like Ms. Jacobsen suggested would have to quarantine entire classrooms. Ms. Graves expressed that she believes a hybrid option is better than being fully remote.

Randy Allain

Mr. Allain expressed he's a parent of a student at center school. He expressed these discussions have been taking place since this Summer, he expressed there's so much at stake here, he expressed he's seen his son struggle on certain days with remote learning, he expressed that his family has made financial sacrifices to try to make this work, but I'm also really concerned with the big picture, he expressed that we are following state metrics, and that Mattapoissett is actually in the red and therefore going in the wrong direction, he expressed he doesn't believe it's the best time to make that jump into full in person. Mr. Allain expressed he's not disputing the data from Dr. Grossman, however all it takes is one death, he expressed that people who haven't seen a death at the hands of COVID probably have a different outlook on this than others.

Michael Kwoka

Mr. Kwoka expressed that he is the father of a 2nd grader at Center School. He expressed that listening to all the comments, and they are all well received, he expressed it's a troubling and challenging time and he expressed he appreciates all the efforts from the students and the staff to try to make a go at this, but please understand that there's many of us that are making a go at it at 3 or 4 in the morning to keep our livelihoods moving forward, just understanding that there is a lot of pain

and stress throughout the community that you might not be aware of. Mr. Kwoka expressed that the frustration this group of parents has is that the state was pretty clear, that each school district needed to submit a remote learning plan, a hybrid plan and a full in person plan and the school district failed to do that. Mr. Kwoka expressed that the school district only produced two plans and didn't even put forward a third plan, he expressed they have been patiently waiting and we want to understand where is the full in person back to school plan. He expressed that what it says to him is that there was no intention to consider it, which is unacceptable for the members of this community. Mr. Kwoka expressed that in front of him he has the Mass Building Authority website in front of him which shows him Center School square footage and Center School has 361 square feet per student, he expressed that data is out there, he expressed he would like to see the school surveys saying that the 6 feet is such a challenge. He expressed that he wants transparency, that the parents are there to help, let us be your partner in this process. Mr. Kwoka expressed that there are plenty of places across the world and even here in this country that have put children back at school full time, he expressed these children deserve it and need to be back full time.

Amanda Hastings

Ms. Hastings expressed that from her perspective is very similar to Mr. Kwoka, she expressed that they are not saying they want their kids to go back full time tomorrow, the expectation was that 3 plans be put forth and that didn't happen, we are just really looking for that data, personally I'm a data driven person, I'm an analyst in real life, so for me to not have access to the data that's being used for making these very important decisions is problematic. Ms. Hastings expressed that her child is very social he needs that one to one inter personal relation, he needs time to build friendships and academically he's not being challenged like he would be in a full time program or model. Therefore, as a parent who is concerned about their child I would love to see what the plan looks like.

Chairperson Muse thanked all the speakers, he expressed he certainly understands all of your concerns and all of your frustrations. Mr. Muse expressed that this school district has worked tirelessly to put together a plan, develop a plan and then implement a plan that would allow as many students to go back to school in person as possible. Mr. Muse expressed that there is no question that everyone involved wants and realizes that full in person is better that what we are facing now, he expressed that is not disputed or questions in any way. Mr. Muse expressed that he understands the challenges of the families and they are real, he expressed that everyone faces similar situations in many different ways. Mr. Muse stated that he has been a school committee member for 9 years, he expressed that he started involving himself in the school system 28 years ago when I went to Center School reading to children in the library, he expressed he knows the teachers and administrators in this system and they all absolutely have every child's best interest at heart, these are great people, that have tried very hard. He expressed this administration with a new superintendent and a very small support staff during the time that we had to create the plans did a fantastic job and reached out to every possible stakeholder and held uncounted meetings. Mr. Muse expressed that contrary to what was said tonight, three plans were submitted to DESE and approved with no comments or suggestions for change, he expressed that, that information was given to this school committee, this school committee heard this information, had public meetings on this information and voted to go with a hybrid plan for a number of reasons, that currently are proven to be advantageous for the fact that we have had a COVID case in our school and we are currently a community that is currently in the "RED". Mr. Muse expressed that "we want kids to go back in school but we want kids to be safe and we have the responsibility to keep this community safe, not just the individual child, that's not the issue, while I respect the data that was presented, it does not discuss the potential spread for students and for our community and as a region, those are considerations that we have to be cognizant of, and we will look to find any information that we can." Mr. Muse expressed that he was on the building committee for 5 years, and the number reported of 361 square feet per student is very misleading, he expressed that includes hallways, boiler rooms, he expressed its square footage of the entire area. Mr. Muse expressed that the stakeholders looked at all the data, hoping, praying

that they could make it work, so that as many students as possible could be in the school and be in there safely. Mr. Muse expressed that these are good people that did hard, thorough, professional work to get to this point and we as a school committee heard that information and took a vote, but part of the vote was that we would be willing to look at the plan as data changed and things happened we could adjust the plan, Mr. Muse expressed that unfortunately the data in the last few days is not very good, but we are still willing and open and would like and do whatever we can to do as much as possible to have as many students as possible in the schools as long as it is done with equity and safety. Mr. Muse expressed that the school committee is the entity that makes this decision, he expressed that they are given the facts, he expressed that there is no single data point or combined information that will create a trip wire that says at this point we will proceed to do something different, it does not exist. He expressed we take all the information we absorbed it and then we vote as a committee, he expressed he has great confidence in his committee and great confidence in the administration and I hope that the public who I know are very frustrated will take solace in the fact that they have fantastic people who are working hard trying to make this happened for you. Mr. Muse expressed that we will now hear from school administration.

V. General

A. School Administration Reopening Schools Update

Administrators Statements:

Superintendent Michael Nelson:

As many have already noted I'm keenly aware how important this topic is to our students, families and our communities, the expectation of the Tri-Town regards to their schools is an incredible point of pride no matter the different perspectives and opinions that is the commonality, the support that so many give to our school in so many different ways. We are nearing the end of week 5 of being back in our school building, as you mentioned in mid August the school committee approved the back to school reopening plan 2020-2021 plan and we opened our buildings on September 16th to students, the first 6 weeks of school is always some of the most important weeks of the year and that is especially true this year as we navigate the COVID 19 realities we are all facing. As I've shared before September 16th was such an important day for our school community, simply put, seeing our staff members and students back in our buildings help create some sense of normalcy in a year that has truly been firsts and unknowns. I want to be very clear that our goal has been and continues to be that we want as many students learning in person in schools as possible while recognizing that each family, each parent, each guardian needs to make the decision they think is best for their child or their children and their family. We are proud that we are one of the school districts in the area that began our schools in hybrid learning model and not remotely, as of today we have 211 at Center School learning in the hybrid model, we have 163 students at Old Hammondtown School learning in the hybrid model, we have 25 remote learners combined and 12 students who are being homeschooled, that's 11 more than last year. This year our school buildings are operating very differently to highlight several of our mitigation measures we are facilitating to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 we are requiring all students grades 2 to 6 to wear face coverings, and our youngest learners are strongly encouraged to do the same, we are pleased to announce that thus far compliance has rarely been an issue. We offer at least three mask breaks for students a day, how we move about the building is drastically different with new hallway procedures and learning spaces and designs, our traffic patterns during arrival and dismissal are different and supported by the local Police Department who I thank very much for their ongoing support and our focus social distancing is immense, we do not allow any sharing and discourage sharing materials and equipment, we avoid physical contacts at all costs and we maintain at least 6 feet of space between students and individuals whenever possible and promote increase hand washing and the use of hand sanitizer on an ongoing basis. Our cleaning protocols are strategic and thorough, however one of our primary focus or goals has been to prevent close contacts being established, presently the Department of Public Health and the Department of Education define a close contact as someone within 6 feet of another symptomatic or positive COVID-19 individual for at least 15 minutes and as

many of you are aware just last night the CDC endorsed that those 15 minutes could be cumulative within a 24 hour period, keeping our distance from one another is essential to keeping our students, staff members and our community healthy, this helps our students and staff stay in our buildings teaching and learning as much as possible. During the past two weeks as we talked about a little bit tonight our school community has had its' first experience with COVID-19 and positive cases involving individuals in our schools, two individuals at Sippican School tested positive early last week, a Jr. High School individual at the mid point last week and yesterday our first individual at Center School. Our focus on social distancing and preventing close contacts to the best of our ability has worked thus far moreover as mentioned the Towns of Mattapoisett and Rochester have moved from the color code of yellow to red on the Department of Public Health and Department of Education weekly report after several weeks of being in the grey coding, what this means is that we do have a some uptick in cases within our communities, I've routinely consulted with local health officials as recently as this morning and our school physician to ensure they support our current learning model based on all the available data points, the tri-town health officials have agreed to meet every three weeks in accordance with the department of health's guidance to discuss data trends and safety and health indicators, key indicators that we have agreed upon are State COVID 19 data, county data, local data and school based data, this includes number of individuals being quarantined, waiting for testing or have tested positive. We consider the board of health's learning model recommendations, our school physicians learning model recommendation, the administration learning model recommendation, key CDC guidance to include mask/face coverings and social distancing recommendations, key department of education guidance such as transportation, mask and face coverings and social distancing recommendations. As I have shared previously we are keenly aware of the importance of our HVAC and air quality clearance that currently we are in good standing. Staff availability continues to be one of our main concerns to make sure that we can assure safety and appropriate teaching and learning, keeping close contacts to a minimum is our goal, we are trying to attract as many substitutes and additional staff members to support our students and families and also we are continuously monitoring our PPE status, currently we feel that we are appropriately supplied, these are just are just 12 or 13 of the key indicators that we have routinely discussed and any other information that presents itself as valuable. Our 7 Mattapoisett school buses continue to adhere to the most recent guidance and we are pleased to announce that we currently do not have a waitlist at this time, we can fit 24 to 25 students on a 77 passenger bus per the current guidelines, if both cohorts were combined we would have to we would need to add three buses to meet the current guidelines as I just described. We have been tracking who is riding and who is not riding based on the indication who thought they would need transportation during the first weeks of school to be able to adjust down the line and I plan to report this information with more detail at our next scheduled school committee meeting. We continue to offer free breakfast and lunch to all students in our community, this will occur for all students throughout the school year no matter what learning model they have chosen, you should know that presently our food service numbers are much lower that they were last year. Regarding technology our students grades 2 to 6 have received a chromebook assigned to them, we have more chromebooks on the way, we also offered devices to K and 1st grade as needed, as I have reported previously we have ordered ipads and so that all our K and 1st grade students have an assigned ipad we are still waiting for their arrival. It should be noted that we have been able to operate our Project Grow model in a similar fashion and we have been able to offer additional services to some of our complex learners and in accordance with the department of education guidance. At this point I will ask Principal Rose Bowman to give an overview the hybrid learning model and what the current data looks like.

Principal Rosemary Bowman:

It's a pleasure meeting and how much I appreciate the parents and their willingness to share all their concerns as a community we are going to come together and meet the needs of all of our students together we can do this. As we look at the hybrid model and I look at the students in kindergarten through grade six, as you are all aware we have divided each classroom into two

cohorts, cohort A and B based on the square footage of each of the classrooms we can have 11 desks in the room so that was the critical piece in having the class divided into two that we have been able to meet the needs in each of the classes, kindergarten through grade 6. The relationship that was addressed early on between the teacher and the child it's so important now. In the spring when we had to close we all felt the saving grace was these children had been with the teachers from September on and that relationship was strong. We were all very concerned as the new year began that this would be a new group of children and that we wanted to make sure that the children were in school as much as we could possibly allow to build the relationship with the teacher and with their peers. I have to say the students have risen to the occasion and I know how challenging it is for families at home and for the teachers trying to give 100% to each cohort but the children when they're here there's a presence about them that is so strong and positive and they are so grateful to be back with their peers that I am glad that we have had these weeks to build that bond. The children and each cohort come together on the morning meeting and as all of you know, we have had our tech issues with some things but with a lot of support and help from one another we're able to provide three times that the children that are the midday check in on the hybrid out days can be with their teacher with the morning meeting, the midday check in for any questions or concerns and the closing circle and so I know that this has been incredibly important to have the children in school. We would all love to have all children in school five days a week however, based on the square footage of the classrooms I can say to you that the maximum number of children that I can put in the classrooms in both schools is 11 at this time and so that is why the system is working and I give extraordinary credit to the families who have supported us in this process.

Final thoughts:

I have to begin by saying what a privilege it is for me to be part of the school system for so many years. I've dedicated my life to education but I have never experienced a pandemic. I have never experienced the things that all of you are going through and I have tremendous respect for each family and how you are trying to balance your work life and your home life and so we are hearing you loud and clear about the challenges that have been presented. There are many scenarios that have been brought forward. We know that there isn't one perfect way. We are working every day to take our hybrid model and bring it to the best level it can but as the Superintendent said we have heard your concerns; these will all be taken into consideration and I just feel very strongly that the parameters that we have been living by with utilizing the 6-foot distancing is critically important and we need to maintain that as we move forward to make any changes that might be made. Our teachers are working diligently and care deeply about your children. As we look at our youngest children if we were going to look at any group, that is most vulnerable, I think we will all agree that early childhood falls into that category and so we hear your concerns and we will work with you and continue to move forward. The children have led us with their positive attitude and we will follow their example as we move forward through this challenge.

Associate Principal Kevin Tavares:

Focus on Learning We know that one of our main concerns was determining where our students were academically as we reentered the new school year. Our focus was on identifying lost learning and planning the instruction around bridging that gap. One of the ways that we did that was to identify grade level priority standards. We were able to accomplish this as part of our 10-day reopening plan back in September. Once these standards were identified we were able to prepare instruction to meet those standards. We also used a benchmark monitoring tool called AIMSWeb plus. We have used this tool for several years now in Mattapoissett and it was recently adopted by the District and will be used in all grades K-12. AIMSWeb®Plus is a web-based tool that screens and monitors the reading and math skills of our K-6 students. It is standard-aligned and the data is used to find learning gaps quickly, identify at-risk students, and assess individual student growth. The data is used to customize instruction and interventions to help students reach their learning goals. This benchmark assessment tool is given three times a year. Fall, winter, and spring. Teachers have

begun to unpack the data and will take a deeper look on our Nov. 3 PD day. Our teaching this year will be guided by grade-level content and learning, depth of instruction, not pace, inclusion for each and every learner, and addressing gaps in learning through instruction. What is important to prepare students in case we need to pivot. Relationships: We know that building relationships is one of the keys to student success. Building trusting relationships with teachers and peers, and being part of a classroom community through whole class morning meetings, midday check-in, and closing circle helps to foster those connections. Use of the chromebooks and Google Classroom, particularly in our lower grades, is a critical component of a smooth transition. The routines and expectations that are established in school will prepare us if we need to pivot to full remote. Teachers have done an amazing job getting students to a place where they are ready to adapt.

Mr. Muse thanked the administration for their statements. Mr. Muse expressed that we will now hear from each school committee member.

School Committee Member Statements:

Ms. Barrows stated the following:

I want to begin by applauding the parents and caretakers for their ability to hold strong and go to incredible lengths to ensure their children remain connected and continue their education through the most challenging of times. As an educator and a parent of a young child, this difficult task is not lost on me.

I also commend the ORR district administration and teachers for their vigilance to mitigation strategies within the schools and feel strongly that the protocols in place will reduce the risk of the transmission of COVID in our schools.

I believe that the learning model in place will enable our schools to stay open for in-person learning longer and accelerate the timeline of returning to full in-person learning for our students. As community transmission begins to spike once again, I feel strongly that it would be irresponsible to our students and staff to reopen for full time in person learning prematurely. I support the district's plan to continue with hybrid learning and I believe that the most recent trend in positive cases, sending Mattapoisett into the high risk category, is an example of how the metrics can quickly shift.

With all of this said, I would like to hear about the data and guidelines the district will be using to determine the appropriate time to begin in person learning, especially for our youngest learners. I believe that just as we have to be to pivot models from hybrid to remote, we should also show have a model ready for a return to full time in person learning.

Carole Clifford Statement:

Ms. Clifford expressed she understands the group represented here wants to know what the pivoting point would be, she expressed she understands there is a list of data to consider, she expressed it would be nice to have more concrete information about what that pivot would look like, would we transition and bring younger ones in first, do it gradually as time goes by, is there a way to bring in our first graders now, is there room? Is there a way to tweak the hybrid plan to make it make equitable? Ms. Clifford expressed that these are the types of things she's interested in exploring. She expressed that she herself was a single mom for a long time so she knows having that kind of difficulty, she expressed that right now we are utilizing the hybrid plan but we need to express to the parents that once we get to a certain point we will be able to go to some form of full in person learning. She expressed that she thinks the district and the teachers have done a great job, but she expressed they are also frustrated, she expressed this is really hard and it doesn't work for all

children. She expressed she certainly knows it can't be tomorrow but when do we make the transition to full in person.

Dr. Finning stated the following: *I want to thank and applaud the families and guardians who requested this meeting. While I've heard significant frustration - from students, families and teachers in the hybrid model - never once have I heard people question the effort or care of our teachers or building administrators. What I have heard parallels what I first requested during the initial meeting on August 6, 2020 where the plan was approved, with me as the sole dissenter due to lack of inclusion of the DESE required in person plan. I articulated the need for an in person plan, for key indicators we would use to inform decisions to potentially shift modality AND for prioritization of k-2 along with students with special needs. Again at a chairs meeting in August 26, via email on September 21 and at the joint meeting on 9/24 I have continued to ask for an in person plan, for the details of the feasibility study for the space usage, for indicators/matrices we would use and ultimately the data used to make the dismissive statement that an in person is not feasible in the reopening plan approved by this body on August 6.*

With all due respect Mr. Muse, in your remarks this evening you indicated an in person plan was provided and I have not seen it and from the remarks this evening I do not believe our community has seen it.

I'm heartened by the key indicators Mr. Nelson rattled off but request that those are provided in writing for review.

I believe our community deserves to have a specific timetable established and shared for 1) what an in person plan requires - allowing the school committee and parents and families to be part of the solution, 2) what indicators and matrixes we will use to make decisions AND 3) share the data that informed the fully remote and hybrid plans. Mr. Muse, I implore you to ask Mr. Nelson to commit to a timeline for these deliverables before we close the meeting tonight. Thank you

Carly Lavin Statement:

Ms. Lavin expressed that there were a lot of wonderful things said here tonight by all her committee members, she expressed she would echo a lot of what was said and she expressed she was in agreement with almost all of them. Ms. Lavin thanked the parents for their resilience, she expressed as a parent of two school aged children this is very challenging, she expressed she heard at least one parent mention the "4 a.m.'s" she expressed she has been there, she is doing that as well, she also expressed that she is feeling all the social emotional effects, she expressed that she is with all of you on all sides. Ms. Lavin expressed that for those that don't know her she explained that her background is in data, she is focused on risk management, that is my career, she expressed she understands the need to see data and feel grounded in it and I have been working with administration to get at those points, she expressed that they had a very successful Joint Labor Management meeting a couple of weeks earlier and spoke regarding a lot of these things ahead of this meeting. She expressed she is a huge fan of the idea of "pivoting" she expressed that to her "pivoting" means value over routine, she expressed we should be leaning to into pivoting into things that are working well and being brave enough to say that certain things are not working and move away. She expressed that for her it's the mid-day check-in, she asked if there's enough value there for everyone, and she believes that the teachers and the administration are also having those conversations. Ms. Lavin expressed that everyone agrees that bringing children back in person would be the best scenario, there is no doubt there, she expressed she heard themes of stability, equity, safety, and for me safety is beyond COVID, she expressed that putting the school layout should not be made public, she expressed that is not a safe thing for us to do. She expressed that prior to COVID the world of ALICE was very much the top of priority for this committee as well as the administration and balancing all aspects of safety is important, she expressed it's not the only

decision point but it is important. Ms. Lavin asked for continued trust in this committee that we are taking all these things into consideration and that when we can be fully transparent you will get it and when you can't I ask that you reach out to us as you have to have those conversations. She expressed that she appreciates this group of parents and caregivers that got together and are asking for this committee to move forward but I also echo what Ms. Barrows has said around fully supporting the hybrid model as it stands right now, she expressed she believes it would be detrimental to go back full in person today, however she asked how do we get significant incremental value for students at greatest risk, she expressed we need to how best to do that especially if it's being recommended by the teachers. She asked that when a survey is put forward that the administration be very robust in capturing a lot of comments and input from the community around a lot of different options so that we have that data to make decisions with.

Mr. Muse expressed that he appreciates everyone's comments. He expressed that through the evening all the comments made cumulatively there is an enormous amount of information and we are on the same page in virtually every instance. Mr. Muse expressed that it is understood that the teachers, administration and everyone is working hard, he expressed he appreciates the need to use data to form our opinions and form our decisions. Mr. Muse expressed that this pandemic is constantly changing in recommendations and information and we are required in many instances to follow them by law and with others we have to consolidate all the information and work together as a committee to move forward, which we will do. Mr. Muse expressed he heard of good ideas and him and his committee will work with Superintendent Nelson to have discussions to determine potential other methodologies to move forward and to increase the amount of in person learning. Mr. Muse expressed that he is very grateful to all the parents he understands all of their emotions, he understands their knowledge from their own personal lives and about their children and he appreciates all the comments from the staff and the administration. Mr. Muse asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting with the commitment that we will be working together and we will be meeting again on Monday, October 26th during our regularly scheduled meeting, and possibly having taken all this information under advisement and formulate a statement at that time.

Ms. Lavin asked if there was a way to put a specific date for some incremental plan changes in place, beyond just conceptual, where we can have some actual tangible steps to report back.

Mr. Muse expressed that given all the information received tonight and with the idea that we are trying to make something happen incrementing and maybe we can share some of those things on Monday night. He expressed it would be wise to take everything we have heard and all that has been said and make a statement on Monday night.

Dr. Finning thanked Ms. Lavin for her request and asked if this will be an agenda item on Monday night? Mr. Muse expressed that yes this will be on the agenda to discuss specifics.

Ms. Lavin wanted to be clear that she was referring to consideration to feasible incremental changes to our hybrid plan and not full in person K through 6.

Mr. Muse expressed that he does understand the distinction between the two requests. Mr. Muse expressed that this committee and administration will make the commitment to look hard at growing the in person learning.

Dr. Finning expressed that she wanted to clarify her requests, she expressed that she didn't ask for the in-person plan, she did ask for a timetable for when those things would be delivered, she expressed that we as a committee have a responsibility to the committee not for you to single handedly dismiss the idea of an in person but that one would be brought to the committee for the committee to vote on as a whole and make a decision.

Mr. Muse expressed that he is not dismissing anything, he expressed this has been discussed in the initial vote and in the initial plan, he expressed we would be better served to look at timelines and to look at incremental opportunities to improve the situation.

Ms. Lavin expressed that she feels with what we know about this disease and the data being ever so changing she expressed she's not willing to put off the table the full time in person learning, she expressed there is too much we don't know and so much that we can learn, she expressed she is not willing to strike that off the table, but that she agrees that we should begin with incremental learning for our most vulnerable students.

Mr. Muse agreed and expressed that based on what we know now, for example if social distancing was reduced we would have the ability to have more students in the building, however based on the guiding principles that we have now I don't know how it can be done, Mr. Muse expressed he would like to improve the situation if the guidelines change.

Ms. Lavin expressed that between Ms. Barrows, Dr. Finning and herself she expressed that they are all saying something very similar and I want to make sure that you are in agreement Mr. Muse, she expressed that they are looking for an actual timeline from the administration when they will report to the school committee on when we will see the incremental learning plan and on that timeline and understand what the full in person would physically look like.

Mr. Muse expressed he appreciates the question and he is recommending that Mr. Nelson give us that data on Monday and give him time to absorb all this information and a statement will be made by the administration.

Ms. Barrows asked Mr. Nelson if that was a doable task for Monday night. Mr. Nelson expressed that he would be happy to report on Monday after reflecting on the information that was shared at tonight's meeting in terms of next steps, Mr. Nelson expressed that he heard, listened, summarized what he thought were the key points from the different presenters and he's happy to have an open conversation in terms of next steps for school committee on Monday night.

Meeting adjourned at 8:19 p.m. by roll call vote

Motion by Ms. Clifford, seconded by Ms. Barrows.

(Roll Call Vote: Barrows: yes, Clifford: yes, Lavin: yes, Muse: yes, Finning: yes)