

New Hartford Public Schools  
Opening School Committee Meeting  
Thursday, August 12, 2021 at 3:00 p.m.

In Attendance: Brian Murphy, Amy Ouellette, Janet Terenzi, Marie Kitch, Michael Decerbo, Dennis Baker, Paul Carmen, Amanda Shaw, Jen Harris, Kelly Carroll, , Tom Buzzi, Sarah Gaedeke

Absent: John Pollutro, Jim McMellon, Linda Fitzgerald, Barbara McLean, Heather Mathes, Tara Ljubuncic, Matthew Eames

Brian Murphy opened the meeting at 3:02 p.m. with a moment of silence to pray for the families displaced by the New Hartford House Fire, and the first responders. He then asked members to introduce themselves.

Brian started by reviewing the Reopening Plan and the process moving forward after today. After review, comments and approval of the Plan, he will then present this at the Board of Education Meeting on Tuesday, August 17, 2021. The Connecticut State Department of Education did come forth with changes to the Opening Plan, but did not address masks. New Hartford Public Schools will continue to monitor any changes to the State's mask mandates. Our procedures and protocols are going back to pre-COVID. All children will be back in school, and distance learning is off the table.

Brian then went on to review the Reopening Plan for 2021-2022.

**Major Changes from last June:**

**Masks are required to be worn on schools buses by drivers and students.**

**Social Distancing has decreased from 6' to 3'.**

**Restrictions on sharing of materials have been removed.**

**Students will return to switching classrooms for specials.**

**Students will have lunch in the cafeteria.**

**Students will not have to wear masks outdoors.**

**Quarantine period has been reduced to 10 days. Vaccinated staff exposed to an individual who tested positive for COVID will not have to quarantine as long as they are asymptomatic.**

**School Districts are not required to test students for COVID 19.**

**Schools will maintain a high level of cleanliness during the school year.**

**Remote Learning will not be offered unless there are extenuating circumstances.**

**Further review and discussion:**

**PPT Meetings will be offered in-person or virtually.**

**Masks are currently required in school for students and staff whether vaccinated or unvaccinated as per Executive Order No. 12A issued by Governor Lamont. However, this Executive Order expires September 30th.**

Brian then asked for questions and comments.

Tom Buzzi stated that no one is looking out for the children except the people in this room and the Board of Education. The science that people are looking at is reprehensible and he has spent countless hours researching vaccines and masks. He challenged anyone to show him a clear view study that says masks work. However, he has countless studies that show masks don't work and are harmful to children and these mandates are affecting their education (cohorting and masks),

thankfully the cohorting restrictions have been changed. Mr. Buzzi went on record to say our Plan should state that "Masks are optional." That is what he wants and that is what he is going to push for at the BOE meeting. If masks are optional and people choose to wear masks he has no problem with that and he respects their decision as a parent to do what they think is best for their child and he would like that same respect in reverse.

Jen Harris then went on to say that members of the teachers' union talked about this issue because this has a huge impact on students and staff. The vast majority of the union members are in favor of requiring masks for the health and safety of the students and staff particularly as numbers are increasing in the State. According to a teachers' survey (with 85% participation rate) 85% of teachers who responded are in support of requiring masks.

Mike Decerbo stated that all bus drivers will be required to wear a mask, students will be required to wear masks, the first row of the bus will be left open, and the buses will be cleaned and sanitized after morning routes.

Discussion ended and Brian asked for a vote to approve the Plan.

All in favor: Amanda Shaw, Amy Ouellette, Jennifer Harris, Kelly Carroll, Marie Kitch, Dennis Baker, Mike Decerbo, Sarah Gaedeke.

Opposed: Tom Buzzi

Abstained: Paul Carmen

Motion to approve the Reopening Plan is approved.

**3. Adjournment** – The meeting adjourned at 3:32 p.m.

Janet Terenzi  
Recording Secretary