

AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5 BOARD OF EDUCATION  
FEBRUARY 23, 2022 SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
6:00 p.m., 25 Newton Road, Woodbridge, CT

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

John Belfonti, Christopher Browe, Shannan Carlson, Paul Davis, Carla Eichler, Sean Hartshorn, Andrea Hubbard, Christina Levere-D'Addio, Dr. Carol Oladele, Patrick Reed, Donna Schuster, Dr. K. Sudhir, Dr. Jennifer Turner

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT**

None

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT**

Dr. Jennifer Byars, Theresa Lumas, Kathy Burke, Shaun DeRosa, Brian Dower, Ernie Goodwin, Kathy Kovalik, Jill LaPlante, Anna Mahon, Stephen Martoni, Peter Downhour

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Belfonti called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

**2. SUPERINTENDENT'S COVID UPDATE**

Presented by Dr. Byars

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

1 parent, 7 residents, and 2 students spoke in favor of ending the mask mandate

**4. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON MASK MANDATE**

*MOTION by Dr. Oladele, SECOND by Dr. Turner, to continue the mask mandate until Dr. Byars receives metrics from health departments*

*VOTES IN FAVOR, 1 (Oladele)*

*OPPOSED, 12 (Belfonti, Browe, Carlson, Davis, Eichler, Hartshorn, Hubbard, Levere-D'Addio, Reed, Schuster, Sudhir, Turner)*

*MOTION FAILED*

**5. DISCUSSION ON SUPERINTENDENT'S PROPOSED 2022-2023 BUDGET**

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**6. SUPERINTENDENT'S MID-YEAR EVALUATION (Executive Session)**

Postponed to Board of Education Special Meeting on March 7, 2022

**7. ADJOURNMENT**

*MOTION by Shannan Carlson, SECOND by Donna Schuster, to adjourn meeting*

*VOTES IN FAVOR, 13 (unanimous)*

*MOTION CARRIED*

Meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Pamela Pero*

Pamela Pero  
Board of Education Recording Clerk

PJP/me

# BOE Special Meeting

February 23, 2022

## Amity Data - Percent Positivity Rate (2 Week Period)

	1/27/2022	2/3/2022	2/10/2022	2/17/2022
Bethany	14.2	9.9	8.4	6.4
Orange	17.8	15.9	12.4	8.9
Woodbridge	11.8	9.6	8.8	6.5

## Amity Data - Confirmed COVID Cases in Students & Staff - (1 Week Period)

	1/27/2022	2/3/2022	2/10/2022	2/17/2022
High School	17	8	2	1
Bethany MS	2	2	0	2
Orange MS	5	4	1	0
ATA	0	0	0	0

## Amity Data - Student Vaccination Rate

	1/27/2022	2/3/2022	2/10/2022	2/17/2022
% 1st Dose	84.1	84.3	84.5	84.6
% Fully Vaccinated	79.5	80.1	80.6	80.6
% Boosted	26.2	29.4	31.2	32.3

# Health Department Recommendations (From OHD and QVHD)

- OHD recommends to make the mask as an option and let the parents decide the best course of action.
- QVHD will support the decisions of local Superintendents and Boards of Education.
- Parents must continue to act responsibly and keep their children home if they are sick , experiencing Covid symptoms, or have been exposed to a confirmed covid case in the family.
- Other mitigating strategies should remain in place.
- Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 will need to follow the quarantine guidelines.
- Treat everyone with respect, regardless of whether they choose to wear a mask or not.

# From Pandemic to Routine Management of Respiratory Virus

- CSDE and CT DPH Guidance focuses on routine management and control.
- Guidance now written for a mask optional school environment.



# Routine Prevention Strategies in Mask Choice Environment

- Increase Vaccination
  - Booster Clinic held on February 17, 2022
    - 36 Booster vaccinations administered
  - Assessing need for additional Clinic TBD March 1-4, 2022
- Stay home when experiencing COVID symptoms
  - Test for COVID

# Routine Prevention Strategies in Mask Choice Environment

- Continue Existing Isolation and Quarantine Guidelines
  - No Quarantine for School-based close contact (regardless of vaccination status),
  - No Quarantine for Vaccinated Individuals for community/home close contact, test on day 5, wear a mask for 10 days
  - Quarantine 5 days for Unvaccinated Individuals for community/home close contact, test on day 5, wear a mask for 10 days
  - Isolate 5 days for confirmed positive COVID test (regardless of vaccination status)
  - Wear a mask for days 6-10 following confirmed positive test (regardless of vaccination status)

# Routine Prevention Strategies in Mask Choice Environment

- Ventilation

- ASHRAE Recommendation - 15 CFM outside air per person; CO<sub>2</sub> levels  $\leq$  1000 ppm
- Current Amity settings (winter) - 15-25 CFM outside air per person; CO<sub>2</sub> levels < 1000 ppm
- Amity settings (spring) - CFM will increase; CO<sub>2</sub> levels < 1000 ppm
  - OSHA CO<sub>2</sub> level recommendation is < 5000 ppm
- Use outdoor space whenever possible

# Routine Prevention Strategies in Mask Choice Environment

- Increased testing
  - Every student and staff member will be provided with a test kit prior to the end of day on Friday, February 25, 2022.
    - “In schools discontinuing universal indoor masking beginning Feb. 28, kits should be used by all staff and students to self-test just prior to the lifting of universal indoor masking. Ideally, one test should be performed at home in the morning prior to leaving for school on the first day optional masking is implemented.” - DPH Press Release February 18, 2022
  - District will maintain a supply of test kits and will distribute to individuals with COVID symptoms.

# Routine Prevention Strategies in Mask Choice Environment

- Support Student & Staff Choice to wear a mask
  - Not required in most settings
    - Required in Nurses' Offices
    - Required for some musical/performing arts
  - No disciplinary consequences for wearing/not wearing a mask
  - Enforce restorative practices and discipline for “mask shaming”
  - Staff will not monitor parental choice
- Why wear a Mask
  - Parental/student choice
  - Health issues/immunocompromised individuals or family members
  - Quarantine Period - 10 days after possible exposure to COVID
  - Isolation Period - Days 6-10 after confirmed positive test for COVID

# Routine Prevention Strategies in Mask Choice Environment

- Follow Sector Rules as Established by the State
  - Since March 2020, the District has followed sector rules for special events. For example:
    - Sports banquets last year limited to restaurant capacity
    - Proms 2021 held outside
    - Graduation held outside at Westville Music Bowl
  - Going forward, the District would follow applicable sector rules as established. For example:
    - Proms 2022
    - Senior Awards Night
    - Spring Musicals

# Routine Prevention Strategies in Mask Choice Environment

- Immunocompromised Students - NO CHANGE
  - Remote learning and other accommodations are permitted on an **exceptional, individual, rare, and case by case basis** for:
    - Students with document immunocompromising conditions;
    - Students who have documented evidence of living in a household with an individual who is unusually vulnerable to COVID-19;
    - Consultation with physician and school medical advisor; and
    - As determined by a student's Planning and Placement Team or 504 Team.
  - There is no dictate for how remote learning is provided to students - Amity will continue to follow the practices for asynchronous remote learning initiated at the start of this school year.

# School Buses

- School buses are public transportation
- FEDERAL mandate requires all individuals to wear masks while on public transportation
- Includes:
  - To/From School
  - Field Trips
  - Athletics
- Extended to at least March 18, 2022



## P.A. 2022-1

- Statewide mandate for masks in schools and childcare centers through February 27, 2022.
- Beginning February 28, 2022, local leadership decides whether to require masks in school settings.
- Section 10-220 of the Connecticut General Statutes permits Superintendents and Boards of Education the authority to make decisions to provide a safe school setting.


## P.A. 2022-1

- P.A. 2022-1 extends the responsibility of the Department of Public Health to issue guidance for school districts on how to decide whether to institute a mask mandate.
  - The Acts also allows the Superintendent/BOE to reinstate local mask mandates under DPH guidance in case of local community spread/outbreak.
- Regardless of the local Superintendent/BOE decisions, the Department of Public Health maintains the authority to reinstate universal mask mandates in schools if needed until June 30, 2022.

# Outbreak Response

- School Districts work with local health departments
  - Local health departments supported by DPH
- Return to known outbreak response strategies
  - Universal masking on temporary basis
  - Limit outside visitors
  - Contact potentially exposed students and staff
  - Return to maximum spacing in classrooms, cafeteria, and other settings
  - Routine cleaning daily

# The Issue of Metrics



Leading Indicator	Re-assess strategies to determine appropriate balance of in-person and remote learning (hybrid learning)	ESS
Number of cases of COVID-19 (14-day average of new cases per 100,000 population per day)	10 new cases per 10,000 per day	cases per 10 per day

- There are NO scientifically proven metrics to determine when masks can be removed.
- There are NO scientifically proven metrics for when masking will need to be reinstated.
- DPH WILL NOT institute a chart or specific guidance at this time.

# Multiple Factors in Determining Return to Masking Required



# Board Position

- Amity BOE did NOT adopt a mask policy.
- Requirements for students and staff to wear masks were followed under student conduct policy (BOE Policy 5131) and under contractual obligations to work as directed by the Superintendent of Schools.
  - Students and staff were directed to comply with the force of law of the Executive Order, and now the Public Act.
- Amity BOE made no formal approval of the required Reopening Plans. Reopening Plans were, and continue to be, operational matters under the responsibility of the Superintendent.

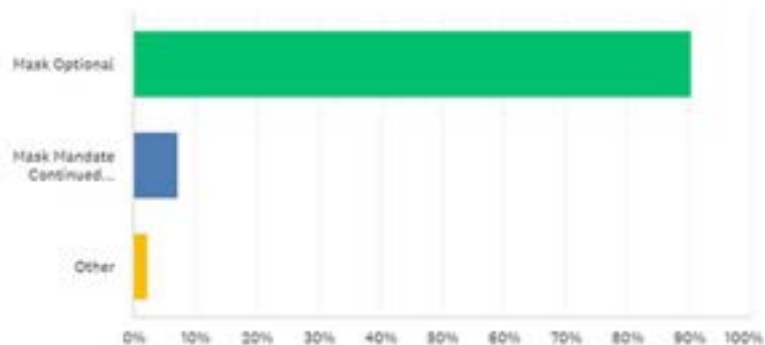
# Board Position

- Therefore, IF the Amity BOE wishes to allow students and staff the choice to wear a mask (and not mandate it for all), THEN no action is needed.
- IF the Amity BOE wishes to continue the mandate of masks for students and staff, THEN a motion should be made.
  - Under Section 10-220 of the Connecticut General Statutes the Amity BOE mandates masks in the school setting for all students and staff under its authority to make decisions to provide a safe school setting (and end date may be set), and if such motion passes;
  - Recommend the development of a masking policy going forward.

# CAPSS Survey Results

As of February 28th, the district will be:

Answered: 124 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Mask Optional	90.32%	112
Mask Mandate Continued (until further review and other date is set)	7.26%	9
Other	2.42%	3
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>124</b>



# In Closing

The Amity students have been amazing. They were incredibly resilient from March 2020-June 2020 as we implemented remote learning on the fly. They were beyond compliant as we implemented restrictions and mitigation strategies throughout the 2020-2021 school year. And this year they rarely complained about seating charts, limitations on lunch, wearing masks, or showing proof of COVID vaccinations or tests.

However, with 23 of their 40 months of secondary education now under COVID restrictions (over 50%) and the state's support to end mask mandates, I implore the Board to consider masking as a choice for all students and staff. With nearly 93% of the population of CT with at least one dose, 78% of the population fully vaccinated (a percent of the population long identified as needed to achieve herd immunity), and 80% of our Amity students fully vaccinated, I believe it is time to make that next step in our return to normal. Every moment of the pandemic has come with stress and anxiety - whether it was when we were increasing restrictions or as we have lowered them - however each of those steps has proven to be the right choice at the right time, and we need to have faith in the CSDE, DPH, and state leaders that now is no different.

I am sure you appreciate the perspective of 2 years to a high school aged student. It is a long time. While I know there are students who are anxious at the end of universal restrictions, we have many more who would lose faith if there was no end in sight. Additionally, the purpose of our schools is to educate. To teach. While I fully understand the responsibility to provide a safe learning environment for our students, that must also be balanced with our obligation to educate our children. Enforcing a local, district mask mandate, when so many other schools and districts are not, would put a significant strain on our teachers and administrators to enforce and would take away precious time from the real purpose of school - instructing, learning, and building our graduates.

# Amity Regional School District No. 5 2022-2023 Proposed Budget

Wendy Carrafiello  
Amity High School

Julian Stevens  
Amity High School

Eveleen Jiaoh  
LINK CREW

Andrew Gilbride

Ryan Hatrick

Nayana Wright

Justin Roche

Jacob Levy

Wil Gambardella

Elizabeth Bowler

February 2022

Superintendent's Budget Proposal  
Board of Education Presentation  
Jennifer P. Byars, Ed.D., Superintendent



# 2022-2023 Town Allocations

## January 13, 2022

	<u>2021-2022</u>	<u>2022-2023</u>	<u>\$ Variance</u>	<u>% Variance</u>
Bethany	\$8,983,608	\$9,070,462	\$86,854	0.97%
Orange	\$25,236,005	\$26,817,922	\$1,581,917	6.27%
Woodbridge	\$16,275,624	\$17,354,527	\$1,078,903	6.63%
Other Revenue	\$1,202,970	\$1,000,197	(\$202,773)	(16.85%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$51,698,207</b>	<b>\$54,243,108</b>	<b>\$2,544,901</b>	<b>4.92%</b>



# Proposed Adjustments (A) – Non-Instructional

Item	Cost
Bitdefender (Endpoint Protection Software) 3-year renewal	-\$ 15,710
Textbooks (World Language and Social Studies); use 2021-2022 Transfer	-\$ 33,500
Private In Transportation	-\$ 20,000
New Position (Assistant Superintendent)	+\$15,388
Summer Work Days MS Counselors	-\$ 3,936
General Liability Insurance	-\$ 3,287
TOTAL	-\$ 61,045



# Proposed Adjustments (B) – Non-Instructional

Item	Cost
Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Instructional Coach (.50 FTE to General Operating Budget plus benefits; collapse classes at ARHS and hire internal candidate)	-\$ 67,586
Middle School Custodian plus benefits; ARHS position currently not permanently filled	-\$ 61,409
TOTAL	-\$128,995



# Proposed Adjustments (C) – Instructional

Item	Cost
Middle School Life Arts Position (2) plus benefits; maintain current staffing and placement of students in study hall	-\$151,330
TOTAL	-\$151,330



# Still in Proposed Budget

- 1.0 Special Education Teacher for Spartan Prep (9-12)
- 1.0 Mental Health Clinician for Spartan Prep (9-12)
- 0.2 Pupil Services Administrative Assistant
- 1.0 Information Security/Support Technician
- 1.0 School Security Officer – High School



# Proposed Budget with Adjustments

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>% Increase</b>
Proposal A	4.80%
Proposal A + B	4.56%
Proposal A + B + C	4.26%





# Current CASBO Data

- Average DRG B School District Budget Increases – 4.87%
- Average All School District Budget Increases – 3.55%



# 2022-2023 Town Allocations (Proposed February 23, 2022)

	<u>Current Request</u>		<u>Proposal A</u>		<u>Proposal A+B</u>		<u>Proposal A+B+C</u>	
	<u>\$ Variance</u>	<u>% Variance</u>	<u>\$ Variance</u>	<u>% Variance</u>	<u>\$ Variance</u>	<u>% Variance</u>	<u>\$ Variance</u>	<u>% Variance</u>
Bethany	\$86,854	0.97%	\$76,455	0.85%	\$54,479	0.61%	\$28,699	0.32%
Orange	\$1,581,91	6.27%	\$1,551,169	6.15%	\$1,486,196	5.89%	\$1,409,972	5.59%
Woodbridge	\$1,078,9	6.63%	\$1,059,005	6.51%	\$1,016,959	6.25%	\$967,633	5.95%
Other Revenue	(\$202,773)	(16.85%)	(\$202,773)	(16.85%)	(\$202,773)	(16.85%)	(\$202,773)	(16.85%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,544,901</b>	<b>4.92%</b>	<b>\$2,483,856</b>	<b>4.80%</b>	<b>\$2,354,861</b>	<b>4.56%</b>	<b>\$2,203,531</b>	<b>4.26%</b>



Thank you  
for  
supporting  
your Amity  
Students

