

**Minutes of Virtual School Committee Meeting
July 30, 2020
Blackstone-Millville Regional School District**

Introduction of Members:

Jane C. Reggio, Chairperson
Erin P. Vinacco, Vice Chairperson
Tara L. Larkin, District Secretary
Caryn D. Vernon, District Treasurer
Sarah E. Williams, Member
Tammy A. Lemieux, Member
Wendy L. Greenstein
Jack R. Keefe, Member

Also in attendance were Superintendent, Jason DeFalco, EdD and Assistant Superintendent, Matthew J. Ehrenworth.

Mrs. Reggio asked for a moment of silence for Harold D. Gould our past school district attorney for many years who recently passed away. His service to the District was invaluable.

Motion: It was moved by Mr. Keefe, seconded by Mrs. Vernon and unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the June 25th meeting.

Standard I

Superintendent evaluation new form used this year
Instructional leadership and curriculum. overall 4.5
Instructional leadership overall 4.2
Instructional leadership meeting diversities. 4.6
Instruction student learners. 3.6 (based on fact that there is really no data)
Overall: Met his standards

Standard 2

Management and operations
Environment - overall 4.5
Student health and safety 4.1
Overall: Met his standards

Standard 3

Support Personnel overall 4.5

Family Engagement overall 4.5

Family Concerns overall 4.0

Family Engagement: Met his standard

Standard 4

Professional Culture - holding everyone to high standards

Commitment of high standards overall 4.6

Mission and Core Values overall 4.6

Meetings 4.3

Communication 4.6

Standard 4 - 50/50 met and exceeded After deliberation they chose Exceeded goal.

Overall score of 4.2 - Dr. DeFalco met his goals

Mrs. Lemieux commends Dr. DeFalco on giving parents his cell phone number and always responds to calls. He listens to concerns.

This evening we will spend a significant amount of time on the preliminary plans for school opening. It is a discussion. We are in an interesting situation but it's new to us. We are learning as much as we can and staying on top of the research. Dr. DeFalco wants to thank staff for making the shift and doing a great job delivering instruction to our students.

We will spend time talking about their initial plans. These are preliminary plans on safely reopening the Blackstone-Millville Regional School District.

He reminds everyone of the guideposts:

The what, how, whole child and community.

We want to use our purpose as a driver. We are still adopting a new curriculum and addressing the needs of the whole child and partnering closely with the entire community.

We have two **main goals**:

1. physical, behavioral, intellectual and social emotional health of the child.
2. Get kids back into the classroom safely and everyone returning safely. Intentional approach to returning to school. We may need to shift some areas as well.

Facebook live will be held Monday at 5:00 p.m. Reaching out to all for input and feedback. It is a community effort.

Data from Boards of Health as follows:

59 Covid 19 cases in Blackstone - .6% infection rate

30 Covid 19 cases in Millville - .9% infection rate

As a regional area we are hovering around .8%

This work has not just begun in the past few weeks. Significant number of people as part of the Return and Recovery Team. What are the different ideas we have. Having ongoing meetings with our District's leadership team. Weekly calls with the Commissioner of D.E.S.E.. Meeting with teachers union. Regular check in with our Blackstone Valley Superintendent Consortium and lastly Research, Research and more Research.

Trying to align their reopening with other areas close to us.

DESE Required 3 plans:

1. In person learning with new safety requirements
2. Hybrid learning
3. Remote learning

Survey was done in the spring. HS 77% said hybrid model and 23% said remote model.

At HMS 80% said hybrid model and 20% said remote model.

At MES 78% said hybrid model and 22% said remote model.

At JFK/AFM Complex 72% said hybrid model and 28% said remote model.

On Friday, July 31, 2020 a second survey will be administered with a survey close date of Wednesday, August 5, 2020.

Our Staff said 18% remote, 22% hybrid and 60% in person with smaller classes.

The survey is so important.

Preliminary Thinking around the plans:

In person:

The regular school day schedule would apply. Need to consider utilizing alternative school spaces to reduce class size, keeping in mind the 6 feet distancing, utilizing external facility spaces, staffing alternatives to reduce class size, reduce the mixing of student groups, limiting travel, and building cohorts across all grades.

All grade K-3 students back in our classrooms each day. They are not spreading the virus the way the older students are. We need to close any literacy gaps that have developed with our students since the beginning of this pandemic. It is very hard to teach a child to read through Google.

To do this we must move all K-1 students to MES and all grades 2-5 to the JFK/AFM Complex. There is a provision in our Regional Agreement that allows us to do this if needed. They are looking for a 2nd person to partner with all teachers in grades 1-3. We are looking at all of this as a moment by moment plan, not a 180 day fix.

Challenge is staffing and space. It is difficult to keep them 6 feet apart in one classroom.

Question: Are these plans due to the Dept. of Education tomorrow or can they make changes?

Yes, they are due tomorrow and they are preliminary and can be changed.

Please do not hit the panic button. We can make revisions to these plans.

We are in the same situation as other school districts.

We are staying right on the timeline we are asked to.

Special Education Students - Jill Pilla-Gallerani

Considerations will be made to maximize in person learning for students with disabilities (up to and including full time in person learning).

Every effort is to be made to offer full time in school to these students.

Our goal as a District is to maximize in person learning for our youngest students and those with the most complex learning disabilities as well as the ELL learners. Remote learning is difficult for these two groups.

Preliminary Thinking....Hybrid (4-12)

We are recommending two days of in person learning, two days of remote learning and one day where everyone is remote (currently deciding on the schedule). This can include options for in person socially distanced tutoring, enrichment activities, and social emotional behavioral learning groups.

We will try to keep family days the same.

During remote learning days, we will offer students in grade 4-8 the opportunity to attend the Boys and Girls club during that time. Try to get as close to a seamless week of instruction as we can get. There will be limited seats and transportation will be required.

During remote days, students in grades 9-12 will be offered the same opportunity at the high school in a designated space by grade (library, gym or auditorium).

Through partnership with Towns they anticipate hiring an additional 10 temporary long term sub teachers for the first 60-90 days to staff our community sites.

Students in remote learning model whether it be hybrid or if full remote model it is important that it will be highly structured.

Example: Students grades 4-12 on a 2-1-2 model

Monday and Tuesday cohort group A would meet in person while Group B would be remote with optional tutoring.

Wednesday would be an all grade remote day that would include asynchronous learning, social emotional students groups, possible enrichment and physical education offerings.

Thursday and Friday group B would meet in person while group A would be remote with optional tutoring.

Preliminary Thinking - Remote Learning Model

This model would be for students who cannot return to school due to medical concerns or whose parents opt for this model.

Attendance will be taken everyday and students will be learning for a full day.
Assignments will be graded and students will receive traditional report cards.
High School Only - these grades will be factored into student grade point average.
There needs to be an accountability piece factored in for everyone.

They have been asked to plan out for 60-90 days but things need to be flexible if things arise and changes need to be made.

This is the new normal and people need to be understanding about the many factors involved. Asking for patience and also guidance.

Mrs. Vernon - if final choice is hybrid and on remote cycle of this plan do they get access to a teacher?

Dr. DeFalco - in conversations they discussed this with teachers today. How do we plan? Develop lessons for all students so that you have a continuity of learning. If you are in front of teacher you will continue with their lessons when you are remote. They do not want one teacher for first part of week and a second teacher for remote. The teachers may have a different method which could be difficult for students.

Mr. Ehrenworth -The District as a whole will need to be flexible and we are going to do this. Stress with families that this is a fluid situation however we cannot have constant fluidity for families. Can't go to hybrid model one week and then the next week go remote. This will not work. We need accurate counts and to be organized in our planning to be successful. Flip flopping will cause issues.

The full remote students are in a different pod.

Mrs. Lemieux - Full remote - teachers assigned to those students. Working 9 -5 and can't help kids during this time. Discussions going and reporting lessons so that if someone misses it they can go back and get it later. Thinks the remote needs consistently more live teaching in order to be successfully brought forth to kids and continue learning.

Hybrid model - teachers will be in the building 5 days per week.

Mrs. Greenstein - on off days with remote part of hybrid wants to make sure it is robust and there is a good amount of time of new learning. She doesn't want it to be just a recap of what was taught when they were in the classroom. Consistently moving forward is very important to her.

Mrs. Vernon - Specialists - they will still have access to them even when remote.

Mrs. Pilla-Gallerani - They will do something to minimize contact once they move. There will be a meeting with all of the specialists to see how they can do things. They are thinking of a way to keep the arts engaging for kids.

Mrs. Lemieux - Hybrid model - she thinks it should be a Monday, Wednesday or something spread out more. She is not a fan of the cleaning day and thinks they should use all five days. We are going to clean at the end of the day and doesn't think we need an entire day for it. Loves that grades will count and provide feedback and assessment. Do not tell a kid that something is optional in the first 2 or 3 weeks of Covid. What do you do with that when you don't have a motivated kid. If we do a hybrid model will special needs students go everyday?

Mrs. Pilla-Gallerani - Yes, they will make every effort to get the kids to go everyday for young and substantially separate students. If it is safe to get kids out into the community they may need to explore more outside activities. They will think of creative ways to get kids lifeskills. They will have smaller groups going out when they do.

Mrs. Greenstein is a fan of the safest way possible to be able to deep clean.

Dr. DeFalco - how do we provide a safe place to be while they go to work? Safety is the main goal. The second goal is around the academic piece. Support children by using long term subs. They would also set up enrichment activities for the students. Have an opportunity to build enrichment skill sets. They will provide lunch and have counselors available as well and instructional coaches for the adults. They would divide up the large space to have small cohorts of students. They want parents to have piece of mind.

Mrs. Reggio -Concept of K-3 students in a very regimented older era way of learning. It is a bit of a sterile environment. Children in front of teachers in the same room live is a benefit to the children. This is what research shows. They can still have a robust

learning and elementary program. Families will need to decide what is the best situation for their child.

Dr. DeFalco - The notion that the classroom they left will not be the same one they come back to. From the perspective of the actual environment they make all kinds of things to help students stay focused. Maybe swivel on a ball or velcro strips, etc. There are many creative ways to be sure that the kids have what they need. Try to get the environment the way they need it but to put a teacher in front of these kids. They have brain breaks and mindfulness. Many teachers know about this but they will be forced to be creative. Toolboxes for teachers if they are not sure what to do and where to go in certain situations. They need to get the wiggles out.

How do parents get details from Boys and Girls Club? There is no cost. It is a service they are providing as a school system. They will apply for a grant to pay for this. They would need for parents to provide transportation.

Mr. Ehrenworth Operational Aspects

They will all be wearing masks. The expectation is that families and teachers will provide their own masks. They will have additional masks for the times when they are needed. They will incorporate mask breaks during the day while students are six feet apart. If a child has a disability or medical reason for not wearing a mask there will be exceptions. Students that are refusing or choosing not to wear a mask will be asked to opt into the remote learning program. They will provide teachers with transparent masks with a window for students with hearing impairments.

Physical distancing is an important piece of this plan. They will have chairs and desks six feet apart as much as possible. They can fit about sixteen desks about 6 feet apart. If there is a situation where they need to have 17 desks in a classroom in order to keep a class together it may shrink down a bit to 5 feet. If it gets too low they will rethink the classroom spacing.

They will also be looking at breaking students up in small groups. Specialists will come into classrooms so students are not transitioning. They will have tents available at the schools to get a break for students.

At Middle and High school level they will remain with their cohorts during the day. Block scheduling will be implemented. To limit the amount of transition they will potentially stagger transition times and entry and dismissal times. Minimize large group

interaction. They know this will be a change but these special circumstances call for the staggering of times.

Supplies will not be shared between students. They will not be hanging up their coats next to each other. Apparel will be kept at their desks and they will keep their supplies with them. Parents will be given what supplies are appropriate for each grade level.

They will emphasize handwashing. Most effective way to combat the virus. They will also have hand sanitizer when the hand washing is not available. They have 160 gallons delivered already. Hand sanitizers ordered and will be in all spaces that students will be. They have ordered floor markings to be able to space 6 feet apart in hallways and stairwells. They have plexi-glass barriers ordered and face shields. Any piece of protective wear has been ordered.

Three main components to plan: Routine evening cleaning and disinfecting. On a daily basis night shift custodians will clean all student and adult spaces. They have purchased misting machines that will spray disinfectant throughout the classrooms. It is an approved disinfectant and is safe. It has a quick timeline to kill the virus. The mist is left on the desk to dry.

The second component is high touch point zones. Custodians will disinfect these zones a minimum of 3 times per day. They include and are not limited to indoor and outdoor handles, crash bars on doors, push pads on doors, urinal and toilet flushing controls, cabinet handles, stairwells. They have ordered electrostatic misters. They are for targeting handles, railings, etc. When the mist is sprayed it encapsulates the item it touches. This allows custodians to move quickly through the buildings.

The third component is daily more regular cleaning which includes bathrooms, classrooms and replacing trash bins at least twice per day and isolation rooms. The isolation rooms can be cleaned on call at any time.

As part of the cleaning plan they are doing an analysis of the HVAC systems and being sure the filtration systems are the correct ones. They will open windows in every room for the largest time possible. They will ask families to have their students dress appropriately. It may sound alarming but they will monitor all circumstances and situations and make changes to the recommendations. For any space that has a lack of air flow they will put air purifiers in those classrooms. They are not sure if they will need to use these rooms as classrooms. The air purifiers are being used in nursing suites and isolation rooms. Limit the amount of viral load leaving these spaces. Fans are not

recommended. It is important to get the fresh air in. They will check all exhausts in each of the rooms. All representatives from the HVAC systems will come in to be sure the settings are correct.

They want families and faculty to know that air quality is top priority.

Transportation -

The survey is important. They want an accurate assessment of those families that need transportation. It would be the safest way if families can transport their children. The buses are an option but the best way is for families to transport students. They will be required to wear masks when entering buses. Students will be scattered and 6 feet apart. You will have a diagonal pattern of students unless they are siblings. They will limit it to 2 siblings to one seat. Windows will be open on the buses. They will figure out how many trips the bus will need to make.

The building principals are making an entry and dismissal plan.

They will be maximizing all points. The Department of Education is making accommodations for this. The very farthest points they experienced in their trip calculating entry time from the bus the largest distances were currently between 40-43 minutes on the bus.

Principals will devise traffic patterns that will maximize space.

They want kids to walk and to bike to school but they need to come up with a plan on the safest routes to get there. They need to map out the routes and make sure the students are safe.

Food Service-

Initial proposals have been put together for a plan. They are trying to limit contact between all people and money. As students pay for meals all they will need to do is scan their barcode. At some point they may not even need to scan barcodes. Students won't be touching pin pads and will have minimal exchange of money. Food will be prepared and students will be eating in classrooms. Ask the public to be sure they are aware of not sending in peanut products and there may be other allergies that may present a problem.

Grade K-5 teachers will take student order in a.m. and they will go to cafeteria to get prepackaged lunches and go back to classrooms to eat. Students must know in

advance what they will be ordering. They hope the transition to and from cafeteria will give students some mobility since they will not be getting recess. The middle school and high school may get some a la carte items to choose from. Students will not be touching anything in the line.

For remote students it will be packaged at the Middle School and sent to Blackstone and Millville. Families are able to come to a location and receive meals for the students in their households.

Kids will not have recess but they can go out in small groups and take a small break and get fresh air but not climbing on the jungle gym, etc. If they had recess they would all be outside at the same time and this would be tough to control the social distancing piece.

If waiver is approved all children up to age 21 will be able to get food service from the school district.

Mrs. Greenstien - will there be 6 foot markers in the classrooms. Yes there will be.

Will the water fountains be closed? There will be water bottling stations. They are going to be disinfected during the day. They received a \$33,000 grant to cover water bottling stations.

Throwing away of the mask- Are there trash cans designated for the removal? Yes there will be.

The concept of recess keeps popping up. They may take another look at this.

Mrs. Greenstein - She is concerned that the custodians may have a difficult time keeping up with this.

They will increase the day custodial staff. They will post for these positions.

Mrs. Greenstein believes that designating one person to this task is very important. She also feels that the amount of nurses is important as well.

Dr. DeFalco - Just the provisions and protocols in place is significant and they will look at a temporary lead nurse to assist and support in each of the buildings. They will utilize the grant for this position.

Mrs. Greenstein wants to support the teachers as well.

We must continue to watch the evolution of the spread.

We do have very specific protocols if there is a positive suspected case in the school district.

We will need to keep a flexible mindset as we move through the school year.

Dr. DeFalco - the funds are coming from Cares Act in the amount of \$40,000. The larger amount is coming through the Governor's Covid Relief Fund at about \$380,000. There are restrictions on how this money is to be used. It is a start up grant to get the schools reopened. The Towns of Blackstone and Millville have been very good about using some of their Cares Act funds for the School District.

Students with asthma - The major disinfecting of rooms will occur when students and staff are not present. They will follow up with school nurses on this subject by Jill Pilla-Gallerani.

Block Scheduling at the High School - Mrs. Lemieux - If teachers are not trained properly it can be difficult to do. In her school district they are considering having teachers in the Special Needs classrooms wear scrubs to be removed before they go home for the day. She would like to see the recess guidelines.

Different buildings have different limitations on how they will transition to the different classrooms.

If face shield are used this will be in addition to wearing a facemask.

If a student can't wear a face mask the face shield may be a substitute to the face mask but only for those students with disabilities and medical conditions that stop them from wearing a face mask.

Some of the nurses are looking into using disposable ponchos.

Dr. DeFalco - What about colds, sniffles and coughs in the nurses office?

We have nine specific protocols in place for the what do we do if?

They are devised by the CDC and shared with us by the Dept. of Education.

The protocols are on the Dept. of Education website and the school district will be sure parents get them connected to our plan.

Mrs. Lemieux - nothing can be shared for ex. physical education, band and chorus etc.

Next Steps:

Administer and review next round of family and staff survey.

Host Facebook Live session on August 3rd @ 5 p.m. on school reopening plans.

Make final recommendations on reopening to the School Committee on August 6th.

Post and hire District lead nurse.

Finalize contract with Family Continuity and on board additional clinical staff.

Post and hire 25 temporary long term subs.

Finalize District calendar.

Build transportation routes and student cohorts using the survey data.

Finalize class list and assignments using survey data.

Finalize staff professional development and training plans.

Schedule socially distanced small group student and family school and teacher orientation for September.

It is a big challenge for pre school students. They are working on this and coming up with a plan.

How does moving students from school to school follow the Regional Agreement?

Mrs. Reggio stated we understand this is a risk and moving students at a time of an emergency can be difficult. We are choosing to have it as a possible model. This may impact how people feel about the Regional Agreement. It is a risk but it is a direction they believe is the best for students, for learning and to meet our mission at this time and in this situation. They understand there may be concerns about this. Much effort and time has gone into this.

Dr. DeFalco - with Kindergarten and 1st grade that would put their numbers at 300 students at MES, at the Complex that would put their numbers at about 325. It just starts to balance it out. It bring neither school to full capacity.

Additional support in our nursing department is needed. They are looking for a District lead Nurse as a temporary position to help with the protocols. Also working with the local board of health. Looking for approval from the Committee to be funded from the Covid Relief fund.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Greenstein, seconded by Mr. Keefe and unanimously voted to approve the Temporary Lead Nurse position in the school district.

They are also looking for Long Term Subs in the classroom.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Vinacco, seconded by Mrs. Lemieux and unanimously voted to approve hiring 15 temporary long term substitute teachers.

Dr. DeFalco stated the Board of Education will take action to relax the licensure. Right now you can teacher for 90 days without a license and they are looking to move this to 180 days.

Mr. Ehrenworth FY21 Budget Review

Legislation says they intend to level fund Chapter 70 for the first quarter of the year and add additional funds for inflation. They do not have that information just yet. There is no guarantee on the other quarters.

School Committee Forum

Mrs. Lemieux -Policy Sub Committee met today to talk about updating our Sexual Harassment Policy. It came from Dr. Laporte and the policy has been vetted through our school attorney. The new guidelines require people to be trained in order to take reports. They recommended to amend the policy. The policy will be available for review on the website and they will vote at the next meeting.

Athletic Enrollment Policy - this was presented at the last meeting. If an athletic team cannot be put together they will have a practice team and only pay ½ of the sports fee. Expectation is that practices will be held the same as the original season would have been.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Vinacco, seconded by Mrs. Lemieux and unanimously voted that If an athletic team cannot be fielded with the appropriate number of participants as set by MIAA they will have a practice team and only pay ½ of the sports fee. Expectation is that practices will be held the same as the original season would have been.

All other policies will be Covid related and the main one that stands out for parents is the attendance policy. They need to follow the guidelines in this area.

Mrs. Reggio did her best to answer questions as they came in. This is something they don't normally do but they were glad to do it. Please feel free to reach out to any member if your question was not answered.

Public Forum - Not on the Opening Plans of the School - The chat is the Public Forum and they have been having it all along.

Mrs. Vinacco - Who is answering the questions? The questions were responded to by Jane Reggio. She did put her email in there but it is jreggio@bmrds.net.

Blackstone has changed the next Board of Selectmen meeting to August 11th @ 7:00 p.m. The two new school committee representatives will be selected at that time.

Next School Committee meeting will be held on August 6th - Live Meeting at 6:00 p.m. at Hartnett Middle School.


They will develop guidelines for the audience.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Lemieux, seconded by Mrs. Larkin to move to Executive Session at 9:55 p.m. and not to return to the regular meeting. This was followed by a roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted,



Monique F. Simard
Recording Secretary

ATTEST: 
Tara L. Larkin, District Secretary