

## Return to School Committee Meeting

Monday, January 25 @ 6 p.m.

Present: Autumn Belajonas, Jessica Berry, Kate Bourne, Adam Bullard, Beckie Delaney, Randy Elwell, Kristin Falla, Mike Felton, Jennifer Garrett, Beth Giggey, Rob Kelley, Cassie Kilbride, Jaime MacCaffray, Paul Meinersmann, Amy Palmer, Stephanie Simmons, Meghan Smith, Rachel Wilcox

- **Update**

- Kate Bourne
  - U.S. – cases and death projected to decline over next few weeks/ not taking into account potential effects of new variants/ probably won't see effect from variant for several weeks
  - Maine – increase in new cases is slowing/ deaths still projected to increase for next couple of weeks
  - Cases in Knox county still increasing
  - Vaccinations – plan not entirely clear on national level/ lots of demand but limited supply
  - Moderna looked at their vaccine – has neutralized virus variants in some testing/ less robust effect against S. African but still neutralizes it
  - Moderna developing booster for S. African variant
- Rachel
  - Will be volunteering for 1<sup>st</sup> vaccination clinic this weekend/ coming together minute by minute/ right now open to public 70 and up – have to sign up ahead of time
  - Vaccine is being distribute to local health systems – in our area that is MaineHealth
  - MaineHealth has space for vaccination clinics and plan
  - 70,000 phone calls on 1<sup>st</sup> day people 70 and older could sign up
  - Rachel said that she works with a staff of about 50 who received their first dose and no one missed work due to vaccine side effects

- **State Vaccine Update**

- Because of limited vaccine supply, the state's vaccination plan is progressing more slowly than anticipated. The vaccines "received to date are barely enough to vaccinate half of the people in phase 1a." Phase 1a includes, among others, health care personnel, residents and staff at long-term health care facilities, and public safety personnel.
- The state changed its vaccination plan and is prioritizing people who are 70 or older and those with documented medical conditions placing them at high risk. It is unclear when vaccines will be available to essential workers. More info can be found at the [Maine COVID-19 Vaccination page](#).

- **Vaccinations and School Personnel**

- At this time, Maine cannot commit to a vaccination timeline for educators.
- The DOE has provided school nurse contact info to the primary health agencies in each county overseeing vaccinations. For our region, MaineHealth is the agency in charge of vaccinations. MaineHealth will communicate with school nurses "as vaccine options emerge."
- To prepare for vaccinations, the DOE recommends:
  - Share the vaccination information that is currently available with your staff ([Moderna](#) and [Pfizer](#)) and encourage all staff who are eligible to get their vaccine.
  - Create a complete list of staff. Identify those who work in direct contact with students for whom it is difficult to maintain the 6 safety requirements (such as bus drivers and ed techs). This list should help determine the order in which your staff should be offered the vaccine, when available to schools.
  - Survey all staff members to get preliminary confirmation of which staff would be vaccinated if offered.
  - Ask staff to confirm with the school nurse if and when they receive the vaccine to help determine remaining needs.

- Discussion about whether all school staff should be vaccinated at same time if enough doses become available
  - Risk b/c ppl can have side effects immediately after receiving vaccine (e.g., aches, fatigue, fever, etc.). If all staff vaccinated at same time risk that many staff could be absent from school following days and would not be able to operate school. Rachel said that no one in her department of the hospital missed work after receiving their first vaccine shot
  - Advantage would be to get the vaccine as soon as becomes available – limited supply, get it if you can

- **Developing a St. George School Vaccination Plan**

- What can we do to be prepared if a limited # of vaccine doses become available for school staff?
- If we were provided enough vaccines for all staff, would we want to stagger vaccinations?
- Want to be prepared if limited # of vaccines become available for school staff. Need some guidance and criteria for how ppl will be selected
- Agreed that first step would be to have info session for staff where health care providers/experts share vaccine info. Mike will work with Kate, Rachel, Autumn, and Amy Drinkwater to find a time when they could present to staff and answer questions
- Staff will receive an email asking them if they want to be vaccinated and added to list in case vaccines become available for school staff
- Also ask staff to report when they receive vaccinations so they can be removed from waiting list
- Discussed how to prioritize – look at # of contacts, difficulty maintaining social distancing, and whether 70 or older:
  1. School Nurse – school health care worker
  2. Staff 70 & older – following state prioritization plan/ staff who are over 70 can also sign up now with Maine Health to be vaccinated
  3. Bus/Van Drivers – lots of contacts across classes and houses/ enclosed space on bus
  4. Day Time Custodians – responsible for cleanup if student sick at school/ cleaning area accessed by infected person
  5. Life Skills/ ARC Staff – work with students across classes and houses/ students can have difficulty social distancing, wearing masks
  6. Middle Level Teachers – About 70 students in 6-8, middle level teachers work with all of them
  7. Ed Techs – often move between classes and houses
  8. Instructional Administrator – works with students K-8, subs for teachers K-8, regularly in K-8 classrooms
  9. School Admin Assistant – office accessed by K-8 students and staff
  10. Teacher working across houses – teachers who regularly interact with students in different houses (i.e., Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, Middle Level)
  11. Teachers working in one house
  12. Food Service – limited direct contact with students this year
  13. Other custodial staff – limited direct contact with students
  14. Other admin
- What about staff with medical conditions? Should they be prioritized?
  - Concerns about determining how to prioritize medical conditions
  - List of approved medical conditions for prioritization on Maine DHHS/CDC website
  - Individuals with medical conditions could also sign up for vaccinations without waiting for doses to become available to school staff. People are self-identifying with medical conditions.
- What about expanding to people 65 and older?
- Overall, group felt good about plan. Mike will discuss with Association. Mike will also talk with Autumn and health advisors about prioritizing people w/ specific medical conditions or 65 & older

- **PPE**

- Recently placed an order today for the following PPE from the state - all provided at no cost:
  - 700 KN95 Non-medical Disposable Masks
  - 100 N95 Health Care Masks

- 50 N95 Health Care Masks (small)
- 300 Medium Gloves (large and XL were not available)
- Question about masks – discussions at federal level about wearing 2 masks
- Rachel and Kate said that quality KN95 masks the best for general public. Costs for KN95 are going down. Need to be careful where you purchase a KN95 to ensure high quality. KN95s have a good fit.
  - If no KN95, then wear cloth mask over surgical mask

- **ESSER II Allocation**

- We learned on Friday that St. George will receive \$176,321.76 through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER II) funds.
- The funds will be available until (i.e., need to be "obligated" by) September 2023.
- Funds can be used for "preventing, preparing for, and responding to COVID 19." This includes, among other things, "addressing learning loss" and "preparing schools for reopening."
- It should be noted that we anticipate losing the approximately \$176,000 in state subsidy we receive for economically disadvantaged students because the % of our students qualifying for free and reduced meals has fallen from around 41% to about 31%.

- **Apprentice Shop**

- The [Apprentice Shop](#) in Rockland is interested in providing a boat building program for a small group (1-6) of our middle level students.
- The program would occur 1x/week on Thursdays and run from February to June 2021. Total cost would be \$1750.
- Students would work in a 50x20 boat shed adjacent to the Apprentice Shop building with a teacher from the Apprentice Shop.
- No other students or people access the building on Thursdays. The rest of the week, a small group of students from Oceanside High School use the building as part of their alternative ed program. Adults in the Apprentice Shop program do NOT access the boat shed where students work.
- Masks are required for all students and teachers. Apprentice Shop teachers self-screen each morning. All tools as well as eye and ear protection are sanitized at the end of each day.
- Discussion:
  - How would student be chosen? Not clear yet – would be discussion among teachers
  - What if other students/ classes want to go off campus? What is the school's policy? Good question. School would need to review each request individually and assess safety
  - General support for providing students with this opportunity. Strong health precautions in place. Takes place in boat shop (open area) and everyone will be masked up
  - Need to figure out transportation
  - We should look at connecting students with local boat builders and tradespeople in St. George

- **Student Mental Health**

- Recent articles in NYT and local papers about impact of pandemic and school closures on student mental health
- Amy Hufnagel (School-wide Behavior Interventionist and LCSW) shared supports/interventions that school has in place:
  - Universal Mental Health Screening tool administered 3x per year
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> round occurring soon
    - Amy H and Stephanie Simmons (School Social Worker) follow up with teachers and parents based on results
    - Will occur 3<sup>rd</sup> time in April
  - Bark – email and search engine monitoring tool - Bark seems effective
  - Suicide Prevention policy w/ protocols
  - School mental health services
    - Stephanie, Amy H, outside clinician
    - Transporting kids to Rockland for weekly services as well

- Crew and Second Step – Tier I interventions
- Amy H and Stephanie – training for staff last year on suicide prevention/ need training again this year
- Work that we still need to do:
  - Implementing a curriculum. Looked at adopting Lifelines Curriculum. Amy H. will talk with Ashley Geel (Health/PE Teacher) about this
  - Screening tools for middle level students
  - Crisis Team meet and run through suicide response and solidify postvention plan
  - Increase connectedness and family engagement
  - More parent education about youth suicide
  - Expand Crew at Middle Level – more time for connection and discussion
  - Piloting platform called EMOTE – monitoring tool for internalizing and externalizing behaviors/ increase timely communication between school staff about student behaviors, social-emotional state, and interventions. Piloting this with small group of students. Middle level will evaluate whether to expand to all middle level students
- Question: What about high school students?
  - Stephanie Simmons shared:
    - Receiving updates from high schools about school-wide supports that are in place
    - Contacted all guidance counselors individually to get updates on St. George high school students
    - Stephanie is reaching out to kids directly
    - She has contact with most of the students we consider at-risk or requiring additional support
    - High school students will reach out to Stephanie
    - Study hall for high school students continues at Jackson Memorial Library 3 afternoons per week. Limited students accessing this resource but we have a student going this week with their tutor
- Jennifer Garrett asked about staff's mental health/ wellbeing:
  - Adam, Stephanie, Amy, and other have been discussing this and how to support staff. Discussions about "staff crew" and how to connect people. Staff can feel disconnected this year due to social distancing and limited movement through school. Not physically meeting as staff in one place. Adam brought to Leadership Team - How do we foster staff crew?