

Minutes
Watertown Board of Education
Special Board Meeting – School Re-Entry Plan
Monday, June 29, 2020 – 7:00 p.m.
Virtual Meeting

Members Present: **Ms. Leslie Crotty, Chairman**
 Mr. Robert Makowski
 Ms. Cathie Rinaldi
 Ms. Diane Bristol
 Ms. Cindy Eastman
 Mr. Jason Malagutti
 Ms. Josephine Cavallo-Rosa

Members Absent: **Mr. Tom Lambert, Vice Chairman**
 Ms. Janelle Wilk, Secretary

Others Present: **Dr. Rydell Harrison, Superintendent of Schools**
 Mr. Tom DiStasio, Business Manager
 Ms. Lisa Fekete, Director of Curriculum and Instruction

- A. Convene Meeting – 7:00 p.m.**
- B. Pledge of Allegiance**
- C. Roll Call – Ms. Davidson**
- D. Discussion: Reopening of Watertown Public Schools**

Dr. Harrison – Good evening. I am excited to share with you some of the work we have been doing for re-entry over the last several weeks. We have a presentation to show you and I will be going over that with you along with Lisa Fekete, our Director of Curriculum and Instruction in collaboration with Leslie Crotty, our Chair of our Board of Education. I want to start by introducing our team on the SRAC. This is a team of people from our district, community and board members. They are: Dr. Rydell Harrison, Superintendent, Ms. Leslie Crotty, Board of Education Chair, Ms. Cathie Rinaldi, Board of Education, Ms. Lisa Fekete, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, Ms. Annette Dillon, Interim Director of Student Services, Dr. Janet Parlato, Watertown HS Principal, Ms. Jen Galik, Polk School Principal, Ms. Mary Jean Mangione, Swift Middle School Assistant Principal, Ms. Terri Baldwin, WEA President, Ms. Sarah Simmons, Nurse Coordinator, Ofc. Josh Bernegger, WPD Interim Chief and Dr. Craig Czarsty, WPS Medical

Advisor. The purpose of our team is to develop a comprehensive plan for reopening Watertown schools in the fall that prioritizes the health and well-being of students and staff, provides solutions to the logistical challenges associated with school operations, and focuses on instructional delivery. Tonight, we will be focusing on those three pieces and I also want to take some time to go through our survey responses. They were: 271 responses from students, 312 from staff, and 1,839 from our families. The survey was sent to all students grades 6 – 11 and all staff. Digging a bit deeper into the responses, you'll see we had 93 responses from the middle school and 178 from the high school. At both schools, all of the grades were well represented. With the staff, of the 312 responses, you can see the breakdown of the schools. Again, proportionally to the five schools. Next, of the family responses, 1,839 parents responded, and you will see it broken down two ways: by grade level with 448 responses in primary grades, 400 responses in the elementary level, 474 responses at the middle school level and 517 at the high school level. Next, we will go over the three focus areas of the survey. To speak about the Health & Well Being survey, Ms. Crotty.

Ms. Crotty – One of the most important things we think about with health and well being is the social/emotional health. When the survey was sent out, Dr. Harrison asked what their most important concerns were. 59% of the students and 60.8% of families prioritized the need for socialization with their peers. From the other areas are the need to connect with their teachers and the need for the psychologist for support and so on. Between the students and families, there is an obvious need for human connection. That will be a large part of what we go off of in order to make the protocols and processes going forward to make sure that we are addressing the social/emotional needs of our students. The next slide illustrates the answer to the question of “What is your most important health & safety concern?”. The answer that had the most responses through all three groups was the exposure to Covid-19. This illustrates just how important the safety protocols are that we will put in place will be to our community. The state requires a face covering and sets guidelines for social distancing and cohorts, hand washing and sanitation of the buildings. All of which will decrease the exposure to Covid. We feel confident that the protocols that we can put in place will speak directly to what these survey results tell us is the greatest concern. The next chart takes into consideration the most important health & safety concern and shows the responses and comments by families and by school. The trends focus on exposure, cleaning, and adherence to protocols put in place. We can also see that the parents of younger students have a higher concern with the protocols than some of the parents of the older students. We can also see that 23% of the families took the time to comment on masks and we recognize the concern across the board. We hear you and recognize the concern. We tried to analyze the data to get a clear picture of the messages that we were getting from our community members and not just looking at it overall, but digging in and looking at the responses by grade level, by school and that helps paint a clearer picture of the biggest concerns. You can see the concern level is high at John Trumbull than it is in the high schools. So, we look at all of this data and try to craft a plan that takes into consideration the concerns that were raised.

Dr. Harrison - Our next area is digging into logistics & operations. One question asked was that if school doesn't go back on a traditional schedule, will you need childcare and do you have options for child care? It was important to get a potential impact on our community, not just for the families, but for our staff as well. You can see 24.7 of our staff and 47.8 of our families said yes, they would need childcare. One piece that is telling for us as a community, is that when asked if they have childcare options, and 72.6% of our families said no, with 15.7% of our staff also saying no. So, as we put together our next steps, it is important to know what that impact would be with our families. At the time of this survey, we were at a different time with thinking about what students could go back, so this was designed to help us make informed decisions. The next area was around transportation and asking what their plan was for transportation. We see that 33.9% of our responses say that the child will ride the bus and 28.8% will use a combination of the bus and self. That is a good majority of the folks that responded telling us that they do need transportation. We need a clear plan for transportation and it important to know how many students we are planning for. The last question around logistics asks if buildings are open in the traditional manner, will you send your child to school? This is a large conversation in our schools, our community, and there are concerns about if a child has medical concerns, and so we wanted a picture of would you send your child? We see that there is an overwhelming response of yes with 76.3% saying yes and only 3.4% saying no, but there are still folks that are uncertain. The concerns with the no or uncertain are around masks and children exposing family members to the virus. Now that we have the state's overarching plan, this is a question we will ask again. Lisa Fekete is our Director of Curriculum and Instruction and she has been working with our team and will talk about what is next.

Ms. Fekete – Thank you. I will be talking a bit about instructional delivery. This slide shows peoples preferred learning environment. We had the choices of traditional, virtual or blended. As you can see, it indicates overwhelmingly that people felt that if there is a way to get back to school, that would be the best approach, with students at 60.1%, staff at 53.5% and families at 67.6%. We tried to probe into the academic concerns that they have and this slide illustrates which concerns were their greatest. You can see from the students, the biggest concern with students was instruction in live time. The students also felt that they were not making enough progress in their grade level. That tells us we need to help students realize how they are progressing. Through all three groups, they feel there needs to be increased engagement and instruction in live time. As we analyze, we see parallels on how they feed into each other. We must ask ourselves how we increase engagement, and if we increase the live instruction, families may feel better on how they are progressing the way they feel they should be. The next slide breaks it down further and looks at the different stakeholder groups. This is the family stakeholder group and their concerns. Again, the live instruction and the engagement were the two things that seem to be what people were looking for. During conversations state wide, there was some talk about the older grades having a different look and when you look at this slide, the middle school and high school show that engagement and live instruction are most important to them. We can use these slides to learn about what we have done so far to help inform some of our decisions as we choose the model going forward. The next slide asks the

same question, but looks at staff responses. It is the same common theme with the two most important things being instruction and engagement.

Dr. Harrison – You heard that last week the state released the plans for re-opening in the fall. We have been waiting for it for a long time, but it didn't stop our planning work. The plan for the district needs to line up with federal and state plans and the guidelines from the Department of Public Health at the state and local level. The state's plan is Adapt, Advance and Achieve and the plan is to bring all students back in the fall with these guidelines: safeguarding the health and safety of students and staff; allowing all students the opportunity to return into the classrooms full time starting in the fall; monitoring the school populations and, when necessary, potentially cancelling classes in the future to appropriately contain COVID-19 spread; emphasizing equity, access, and support to the students and communities who are emerging from this historic disruption; fostering strong two-way communication with partners such as families, educators and staff; and factoring into decisions about reopening the challenges to the physical safety and social-emotional well-being of our students when they are not in school. The next slide shows the guidelines around operational considerations. These were released Thursday, and then today, we received about a 50-page document with clear details on some of these areas. Districts should plan on a fall reopening with in school return for all students, every day. The following protocols should be in place: maximize social distancing, frequent hand washing/use of hand sanitizer, face coverings that completely cover the nose and mouth and enhanced cleaning and disinfection of spaces/surfaces. When we first talked about coming back, we were looking at a lot of conversation about social distancing with limiting the number of students in the classroom, on a bus, six feet of distance around every child in the classroom....and it was very difficult to plan around this because of limited space and because of the challenges of what that looks like in the class with interaction with each other and the teacher. We will look at it now to maximize it in all ways. We will have clear protocols around hand washing so that it is scheduled so our teachers are embedding them into their daily routines and we are building in asset of repeated reminders of good hygiene. Students and teachers will be required to wear a face covering. When we looked at what we received today, there was further guidance about students that may be exempt because of health concerns, times when teachers have instruction, they don't need to have their mouths covered, guidelines around reading to each other, but in those cases, there will be an increase in space. There are guidelines as to when face shields are required as well. However, a face shield can't substitute for regular masks. This will be the biggest change for our students and staff. We will figure out how to work this out as a district. The guidelines talk about mask breaks scheduled in and this is something we will put in place with our student as well. Along with the extra cleaning and sanitizing is what makes it safe to have our students come back to school in the fall. The next slide touches on cohorting. The idea here is that the state is recommending that we keep students in cohorts in grades K – 8. That is typically what we do in K/5 anyway. There are some small modifications we will need to make for next year. Using the teaming structure that we already have in place at the middle school to dig in a little deeper and create cohorts there as well. It is more difficult to have cohorts at the high school, but I have already started having

some of those conversations with Dr. Parlato. What we will see on buses will be key for us. When we had the original guidelines, it said you could essentially have 12 students on a bus at one time. That would have been logistically difficult. I am happy to see that the expectation is that buses will be closer to the normal capacity, but that face coverings are mandatory for drivers and students. They are recommending that we have monitors on buses particularly for our younger grades and there are some clear social distancing guidelines for the bus that is versed in three areas you see here. If there is no spread, full capacity. With minimal spread, full capacity with heightened protocols, then if there is moderate spread, then increase distancing and decrease capacity. From the guidelines today, I see some really great guidelines that we will breakdown, but for instance, there was good information regarding loading students on the bus, filling up the back first then moving forward so you limit kids walking past each other. There has been a lot of thought that we can apply as we finalize the components of our plan.

One key point that will drive our plan is looking at the data trends. Because they have been positive, that is why we can plan to bring all students back. In the event that there is community spread, we would ramp down to a hybrid model which would reduce the numbers of students in the building at one time. That is where we would see something like half students come one day and then when they are home, they are engaged in virtual learning. There are a lot of pieces to work through and this is where the survey data helps to formulate the plan. In looking at what was sent to us today, it is clear that this hybrid model will not be the same in the fall. One of the things we have talked about as a team is how do we prioritize students that may need to be in the building every day. Looking at our special education students with IEPs and making determination around prioritizing face to face learning for some of our students, even though some students may be in the hybrid model. If there is high covid spread, we would have to shift to full distance learning. With what we have learned in the past, if that were to happen going forward, we would be revamping our model around distance learning to make sure that we can respond to the data that we collected; make sure there is live learning, teacher connection, student connection, and building out our plan for that.

As a reminder, the we started with the purpose of our reentry council was to develop this comprehensive plan for re-opening the schools in the fall and looking at these three areas: health & well-being, logistics, and then instructional delivery. When we lay this side by side with the guidance we got from the state, it aligns with what we were already planning. That puts us in a great position.

Ms. Crotty – On the advisory council for school re opening, the Health and Well-being Committee has four areas and they are: processes and protocols, physical health, mental health, and a communication plan. Most importantly, please look at who is involved in the planning: Ms. Laura Meka, Joh Trumbull Principal, Ms. Catherine Walsh, Psychologist, Ms. Julianne Bombero, SPED, Ms. Kelly Bainer, SPED, Ms. Deb Mulhall, St. Mary Magdalen Principal, Mr. Thomas Allen, Social Worker, Ms. Michaela Morris, SPED and Ms. Michelle Spagnoletti, Nurse. Then we have some more over arching people as you can see, like Dr. Craig Czarsky, who is our school medical advisor.

Based on what we received from the state, there will be a lot of processes and protocols that we will put in place and it will be really important whether we are in the green, yellow, or red mode and depending on where the state has us, we will have certain processes for each of those. Whether we will take the temperatures of our students, what the temp/climate should be in the building, what would be healthy? What is the heat like in the classrooms? What are the processes for reporting illness? What about immunization and health records? Our handwashing protocols, reporting and containing an illness, when can they come back to school? Some of the processes we have now will work, some will have to be adjusted. Physical and mental health are extremely important and communication, we talk about planning, communicating efficiently and effectively with every member of the community, to make sure everyone is informed in a timely way and they have confidence in what we are doing.

Dr. Harrison – The next is logistics and operations and looking at these six focus areas: social distancing and mask wearing /PPE, cohorts, hand washing, buses and staffing. He takes it to a granular level. Working with our facilities folks to maximize the space in the classroom, having masks available and ordering PPE (we have placed our orders and expect to have masks available for students and staff), looking at the best ways to cohort and then defining ways around keeping the cohorts together, looking at hand washing protocols, buses and then staffing. As you can imagine, we will likely have some staff that will have some issues coming back, so we want to be able to address those staffing concerns and make sure that we have the right people in place for meeting the needs of our students. I also think it is important to point out the subject matter people on this group as well. They are: Mr. Jason Malagutti, Board Member, Dr. Janet Parlato, Watertown High Principal, Mr. Jeff Turner, Director of Technology, Mr. Paul Catuccio, Dir. of Athletics, Mr. Tom Romano, Custodian, Ms. Michelle Pinella, First Student, Mr. Tom DiStasio, Business Manager, Ms. Ashley Onion, Dir. of Food Services, Mr. Steve St. Mary, Int. Facilities Mgr., Ms. Becky Zadlo, Paraprofessional, Mr. Jim O'Rourke, CEO of YMCA. By fall every student will have a Chromebook assigned to them to bring home and back and forth to school. That is a huge piece in logistics and operations, but will also play a huge role when we start talking about instructional delivery. We will also be talking more about what before and after care looks like for our families, so that is something we will want to continue to have in place, but in addition to that, Jim O'Rourke brings a lot of knowledge to this team because the Y never closed and they have been working through all of these pieces as well and that has been important. Those are the six areas we will be focusing on and they align with areas of our state planning.

Last is Instructional Delivery and we have Ms. Fekete to speak on that.

Ms. Fekete – Prior to getting the guidelines from the state, we talked about what are the lessons that we can learn from what we have already done with respect to remote learning and moving forward. I would remiss if I didn't thank our staff who worked so hard to move to the virtual model very quickly and to the families for all you've done at home.

This part of our planning takes into consideration all three scenarios. Right now, the state is in good shape and the plan is to get kids into school with mitigating factors. But they made it clear

there may be a time where we need to ramp up or ramp down whether there is community spread and such. This focus group is tasked with the three possible scenarios. Right now, we are looking at coming back with the mitigations, the hybrid model, should we have to have some kids come home and increase social distancing, or the complete virtual model. We need to plan for all three to the best possible, and ironing out all of the details. The document that came today will be instrumental in nailing down all of the logistical details for each of these. If you look across the top of the slide, you see the three scenarios, and depending on far things spread, and within the three, we will look at everything that is in the boxes. If we are all back, how will we assess our children and determine what it is we need to focus on to mitigate any gaps, how do we look at our standards to make sure kids are learning what they need to learn, what does that look like? What will assessments look like if we are in a hybrid model or in a virtual model? I see the baseline assessment and the curriculum modification going together so we would need to look at the curriculum and our standards and look at assessment results and see that the best path is moving forward in each of those different scenarios. The same thing goes for the instructional model. The easiest one to talk about is if we are all back at the same time, but there will things we will need to look at to mitigate gaps. The other thing to nail down is how can we have a phase three of virtual learning, if we get to that, and then the same thing if we get to a virtual model, nailing down the details of exactly what they look like. In addition to all of the brainstorming we have done, the document from the state will help synthesize that information and help us make the plan with more specificity. Then there is the professional development piece. What do we need to train our staff with tools and the how to? What does that look like? How do we help them to be ready to move forward with that? In summary, our plan will have all of the questions that we will have to answer about each of the four categories, and then we will answer them if school is normal, in a hybrid, or virtual mode. Our plan is to very clearly communicate that to all of our stakeholders. We have a great committee that we work with and I am positive this will be well worked out.

Dr. Harrison – When we look at next steps, we have the second Special Board Meeting which is July 28th and by then we will have a finalized plan to present. On July 24th, our plans will be submitted to the state, not for approval, but for their information. And then school starts August 27th. We will be doing policy reviews all throughout the summer, like policies around attendance, employees around FLMA, getting good legal guidance around those areas....we have already begun the process of securing federal and state grant funding...so purchasing masks, so everyone has one, at two a day, is a huge number, so it is important to secure additional grants. Collaborating with our Town Officials and making sure there is clear continuity across the different departments and we can support them as needed and they can support us, equipment procurement...we started that process with PPE and what that initial first order looks like to get us rolling for the first day of school and also the devices to make sure every student has a Chromebook and case in the fall. We will do more information gathering from our families involving connectivity, WIFI access, and then July 24th, submitting it to the state. Before I open it to the public for questions, I wanted to anticipate some of the questions that I am sure will be asked. I am a Superintendent, but I try to think like a parent first. Having children

as old as 22 and as young as 7, I can probably span the gambit of anticipating what some of the concerns would be.

Q: What happens if a kid comes to school and they are not feeling well or showing signs of Covid-19? Will they be in the nurse's office with the same kids that maybe fell on the playground? Everyone of our schools will have an isolation area that is specifically for students that are presenting with any signs of Covid-19 symptoms. A: That is spelled out for us in the state guidelines. Q: What happens if my student is immunocompromised and we choose not to send them to school? A: The state requires the district to have a plan in place for students that are not coming to school by choice or came and ended up sick. We will have a clear process in place for those students. That will be driven on the survey on if you plan to send your child to school next year and will help is get a picture on how we will use our staff and if we can have dedicated staff to work on that remote learning plan for those students and how many staff members we have. Q: What happens when if things in the state change? A: Everything we are doing looks at those three scenarios where we are all coming back, in the hybrid, or all remote. We are using this time to plan for and identify the best instructional models for that and then also the logistics around that and the communications around it, incase we have to make that decision very quickly. Having clear processes in place at each of our schools so we are monitoring attendance so we can see of that gives us a clue to monitor a potential outbreak or following up with our students and staff who may be out because of illness and monitor for contact tracing.

E. Public Participation (Please state your name, address and topic of discussion)

Ed Croft – 299 Mt. Fair Dr., WTN – Will preschool have different protocols? No, they will mirror the K – 12 processes. I have heard feedback from our preschool and K families that showing up for the first day of school to see a teacher you have never met with a mask on, that is not the best welcome. We are really thinking through how we can make those connections prior to coming in person so there is some level of familiarity.

Will the new surveys be sent to the new preschool kids and Kindergarten kids? It will be sent to all registered students, including Kindergarten and preschool.

Is there any expectation on the mask types? The document received today gives descriptions on what will qualify for face masks; it does list cloth and paper as long as it covers the nose and mouth.

Michelle Young – 368 Hamilton Ave., WTN – If a child enters the school year, and then decides it is a strain and they need to be home, is that an option? Yes, we will have that option. Not only is it the direction from the state, it is some Dr. Harrison and the SREC team has been planning for.

Tony Karam – 720 Echo Lake Rd., WTN – As we begin the school year and start to learn behaviors in terms of masks and social distancing, will there be room to adopt a policy or will it stay throughout the school year? Mask wearing for all staff and students is a regulation from the state, so there is no option there unless that changes. What we will working on is around protocols for mask breaks.

Michelle Skarupa – 151 Mt. Fair Dr., WTN – If a child is living with someone else that is immunocompromised, will that also be in the plan? There is a number of reasons that a child may need to be kept at home and that will be allowed within the plan.

Do we have an understanding of how it will be handled if a child is refusing to wear the mask? We have not had that discussion yet, but I can tell you as a former principal, this is one of the things we are talking about. How will it be handled? What will the response be? How do we want to empower teachers? With also the clear reminder that the reason we want them in the building is because it is the best way for them to learn and we don't want to create a situation where they have to leave a classroom over refusing to wear a mask and we are getting in the way of their learning from that perspective. This is new for us from a logistical standpoint, but the policies and standards will be clearly communicated to our families.

Jennifer Dionne – 78 Tucker Ave. OAK – Is it possible for a child who is immunocompromised to come to school part of the week and then stay home with distance learning the other part of the week? We don't already have a plan for that but that is one of the things we will be doing is laying out that plan so we have nice continuity. We want kids at home to be doing the same things as kids at school, although you can't replicate what learning at home looks like. I want to give that some more thought logistically, how to work that out, but I do know our teachers are creative on how to build some of that socialization in, even if that was done socially.

My son has a 504 plan in place, will you be adapting 504 plans for the medically fragile children around the state regulations? There will likely be modifications, but I don't want to speak on that before double checking what the state recommendations are on that.

Randy Abaire – 93 Honey Hill Rd., WTN – My son did well with the distance learning. Do we have the option to continue, do we have to send him? There will be an option to stay home...what the requirements are for that are yet to be determined.

Richard Spaulding – 66 Carmel Hill Rd., WTN – My concern is with busses and the crowding on the busses; I would like to drop my children off at school, but I find it hard to get from John Trumbull to Judson on time. Can we make any kind of accommodations so we can get our children on time to school and drop them off safely? You are right, busses are crowded, and that is why this next round of surveys will be important so that we can get a sense of what those buses look like. We have spoken to First Student about the cleaning and sanitation of the buses between routes, so we will likely be making some adjustments to start times to allow for that will the buses, so it may be easier for you to make that transition. We may also have to look at any changes we need to make to our drop off procedures in the mornings at some of our schools.

Ashley Norby – 70 Eastwood Hall Rd., WTN – Will our children who are going to a different school this year have time to go and see the school? We are thinking creatively about how to make those transitions smoother. When you look at kids that are changing schools, we can have upwards of 200 students so the idea of having 200 tours would be difficult. But can we be creative with it and find interesting ways to introduce them to their schools, that is something that our team will continue to speak about, and I know our principals are already thinking about that.

Are you looking at plans that will let the children at least have lunch and recess together? When we are thinking about having a class of students as a cohort, they will be able to stay together in that cohort and eat lunch together. We do need to look at our lunch options at each school and see what that looks like space to space. We want to maximize social interactions but we need to look at how to do that in a safe way where there is nice and easy social distancing that can happen.

Sarah Figueroa – 36 Winthrop St., OAK – How will specials be handled in the schools? Our plan going forward is to have all specials. What we have to do is figure out the best ways to do that where we maximize social distancing. It may look a little different next year than it has in the past, but it is a priority to keep that going. There is a lot of discussion nationally about students playing instruments and students singing, so in those settings, there is a need for more social distancing because of spreading particles through the air. We do need to work through that. With students that struggled with distance learning, and are behind, will there be plans to get these kids back on track? We recognize that we had an interruption with what normal learning looked like, so we can anticipate the normal summer slide that happens academically, it may look larger than in past years. Baseline testing when we first get in and get a sense of where they are, and then balancing it building relationships with our students so we get a picture to where they are.

Is there a resource that we can go to on a state level with our concerns on mask wearing? There is contact information on the State Department of Education's website and you can email the Commissioner directly, you can email the Governor's office, phone calls to both, and I know a lot of the decisions that have been made take the phone calls and emails into consideration. Also, reach out to your state senators and reps as well.

Jeff Pacelli – 41 Chestnut Grove Rd., WTN – I am not happy about the mask mandate. There may be issues from kids that don't have medical concerns, but once they put a mask on, will get fidgety, may not pay attention, and their learning opportunities in a normal environment, they won't have with the mask on. Are there any studies done that shows the physical, emotional and psychological effects of a school aged child wearing a mask for 6/7 hours a day and what are the results? What is the plan for mask breaks? Will all teachers have to follow the same plan? Will more teachers give longer breaks?

There is information coming out of other countries with children wearing masks all day, but the decision to wear the mask is straight from the Department of Public Health, and then from the CDC. We have a district full of teachers that understand our kids and will follow the guidelines and will think about ways to create the best learning environment for our students. We will continue to create our plan, but some of this will be lessons learned when we start the school year.

Carol Hendricks – 415 Echo Lake Rd., WTN – How will you phase the special needs kids in and how will you keep their masks on? There are provisions in the state plan around children with special needs and wearing a mask may not be a possibility. That is a small population of students but some of our planning for them is to increase the PPE for the teachers with those students and typically that is a much smaller setting for those students. We can possibly increase the social distance in that classroom.

How will you keep them social distanced when they have a meltdown or a moment? What is the plan to make sure they are ok? There are protocols around our high needs special classrooms and how teachers should engage and because we know there is more contact between the student and teacher, we will have provisions for more PPE for those teachers.

What about the child in the classroom that has a meltdown? What is in place for kids in a normal classroom? That is part of our normal plan and we are lining up what that looks like.

Monica Quadrato – 11 Vista Dr. WTN – Has there been any discussion about adding air conditioning units to the classrooms? We know our buildings get very warm but I don't know if there are temporary answers to that. I have a list of questions for our new facilities manager who starts in a couple of days and this is one of them. I don't want to over promise.

Questions via Chat

These are abbreviated. To hear the entire question and answer session, please go to:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIf9pwrH64gbrzGfmV4dtSw>

1. What does monitoring mean and will there be a separate area for each school who come in sick? We are required to have a separate area that present symptoms, in addition to the nurse's area. That is the benefit of the cohorts, if one gets sick, and some have been exposed, we can do contact tracing at the local level and see who the child came in contact with.
2. Will teachers have to teach both in person and online if some students can't be in school? Our plan is to pass out the survey to get a better sense of the number of students staying home. Ideally, we will have dedicated teachers for those students. Our teachers work very hard and with them working a full day and then plan for remote learning, that is a really big ask. The more information we can have on the front end, the better we can plan for that.
3. How will families be notified if there is an outbreak? We will use all of our typical areas of notification; email, phone, text. We will follow all protocols for privacy, but will let you know there was a potential exposure or limited exposure and then follow up and follow the Health Department on how to follow up in that situation.
4. What will you do if there is bullying in cohorts? We will still have all bullying plans in place with regards to discipline and handle that on a case by case basis.
5. Are any of the restrictions will ease if the numbers fall throughout the year? That will be up to the Governor's office to determine.
6. Will masks be provided to students? Yes, the district will provide them.
7. The documents from the state say that cloth masks are the acceptable PPE, are there any district guidelines? We will follow the district's guidelines and cloth masks, as long as it covers the nose and mouth completely, that meets the criteria. They can be cloth or paper.
8. How will the heat on the buses and in the classrooms be handled with mask wearing? Our facilities committee is looking at that and looking for cooler areas for our classrooms and how to utilize our space the most effectively. The guidelines have

protocols about inspecting our HVAC systems and making sure they are up to par, but that will be a challenge going forward and our team will continue to look at that. Our teachers are also looking at having some outside classrooms when it is possible and safe to do so.

9. How will it be determined who will be in school and who won't be in the hybrid model? There are a couple of ways to look at it. Based on the state guidelines, they want a percentage of students in the buildings. One way is having elementary aged students stay in the schools, but spread out over all five buildings. The challenge with that is it doesn't make sense for the short term. We could have 50% of our students attending on certain days of the week, we will likely do that alphabetically. That we have to logistically work out; we need to make sure siblings are on the same days and not just in the same building, and also if they have different last names, so we have to take that into consideration as well.
10. Can we consider half days with sanitizing in between? The state's guidance is very clear about all students all day long. There are state mandates around the number of instructional hours that they have to get to by the end of the year, so having too many half days would compromise that. It would also make childcare for our staff and parents challenging.
11. How will collaborative instruction work? We have talked, at the elementary level, about instead of the students switching classes, having the teachers move. We are at the early stages of talking about that.
12. Younger students can receive emails from teachers but can't send them on their Chromebooks. Will there be a change to that? And how will they be cleaned each day before coming home? Every student will have a Chromebook assigned to them to be able to take back and forth. As for cleaning, we can look into that, but they will be the only student using that Chromebook. As far as connecting with teachers, we can absolutely look at that going forward.
13. What about the attendance policy? Will we be penalized if we keep our children home? If they are participating in distance learning, they will not be penalized. We will also get additional information from the state regarding the attendance policies, but locally, we want to make sure we are not incenting students to come to school if they are sick, so this is not the year for encouraging the perfect attendance award.
14. What are the state guidelines regarding science classes? How will lab activities be done? I don't have any specific answers on that, but labs are part of your instruction in the classroom and we will spend time looking at the social distance guidelines we may want to put in place with additional protocols. These are things to talk about at the school levels as well.
15. Can we ensure that on snow days we can work remotely so we don't lose any days? When we first made the shift to distance learning in the spring, the state made it clear this was for Corona virus related absences and we should not assume this is protocols for snow days. Since then, the Superintendents have been having lots of conversations to day that if we can demonstrate a continuity of learning in a remote environment,

they we should be given the latitude to do that in response to snow days. We have not heard back from the state on it as of yet.

16. Will they be able to remove their masks for fresh air during the day? Yes, if they are appropriately distances from each other, they will have breaks during the day.
17. Will there be recess? As it stands now, yes. It is important for them to have that brain break. Regarding what it will look like may be on a school by school basis.
18. What if they come up with a vaccine, are students required to get it? The district is guided by the regulations for health assessments and vaccinations at the state level and we do not have options on that. It is up to the state; if they determine it is a regulation to enter school, we would need to follow that.
19. Will humidification be used in the school as it has been proven that it kills the virus dead in minutes? There is nothing in our guidelines for the use of humidification. Some of the concerns that would come with that is the impact it would have on our surfaces. We have a lot of books and our computers. There are a lot of guidelines regarding HVACs in the schools.
20. Can virtual tours of the schools be an option? Yes.
21. What will the grading system look like? We anticipate that to go back to the traditional grading models.
22. When will the students be assigned their teachers/classes for this year? This summer from their principal. We need time to be strategic with the cohorting. We need the picture of the number of students who will stay home in the fall, so we can get a good look at our numbers in the schools.
23. If a child is sent home with a fever/cough, etc., will a negative Covid 19 test be required for the child to return to school after the fever breaks? I have not read anything about required Covid testing. We can talk about that with the Heath & Wellbeing team and really looking from guidance from the nurse coordinator and she will get the guidelines from the state. Once we get those guidelines, it will be important to update our district quarantine policy and make sure it is communicated properly.
24. Why not have Zoom type live streaming of classes so that students at school and students with distance learning are on the same level? Regardless of the platform, we are looking at (with the model of remote learning) we are looking at the ratio of what is live and what they are doing on their own. Synchronous (what we are doing now) you are asking questions and I can respond real time versus asynchronous (people who will wait and watch the video) who can still ask questions, but not in real time line now. Our plan is to increase the amount of live instruction that we have with our students. That can help with being able to have a student watching a lesson live at home. There are some models where that works nicely and some model where it doesn't.
25. Will high school students who signed up for their classes in February not be taking some of the classes that they signed up for for the sake of cohorts? I don't anticipate that happening. We have more flexibility at the high school level.
26. How large will cohorts typically be to maximize social distancing? At the elementary level we are looking at class size. At the middle school, a Crimson team is a cohort. We

will really have to look at the middle school to determine what works best, but there is some level of corhorting that happens naturally and we will go from there.

27. Will before and after care still be available? Yes.
28. Peer to peer or coteaching models? We know students learn best when they can collaborate with their peers and that is part of the instructional delivery work we are laying out, whether in person or remotely.
29. The students did a Google meet at the end of the year to say goodbye to their friends and teachers. Is it possible to set up a Google meets with the students next year teacher to allow them to say hello before school starts? That is an idea already floating around. There is a good possibility of us doing that.
30. Will the high school classes changing look different this fall to minimize crowds in the halls? Yes, for all schools. Part of the logistics is traffic patterns and really making sure that there is not as much two lane traffic that is happening. Our administrators will work on that at each of their schools.
31. Will temperatures be taken daily for staff and students? The Health & Wellness committee is addressing that now and we will be sharing that information as soon as a decision is made on that.
32. What restrictions will be placed on the Chromebooks? Teachers this year placed videos on Google classrooms that I couldn't watch because the restrictions were attached to my school email account even though I was logged on with my personal device. The school filters will still be in place from a safety standpoint. There is a process for whitelisting specific websites that could be where the teacher would work with our tech department to set that it.
33. Is there any information about the starting of sports and after school clubs? There is guidance in the document today regarding after school clubs. We will look at that again. They might not look like they typically do, but we will look at that. The CIAC has been looking at a plan for sports to begin in the fall. They are looking at high, medium and low contact/risk sports, so we will share more information about that when we receive it.
34. Will there be PPT meetings at the beginning of the school year? They will be scheduled based on need. It will be communicated to parents individually.
35. Has the Resource Teacher been hired at the middle school? No.

F. Board Member Comments

Mr. Makowski – I just want to thank you and Dr. Harrison for hosting tonight's session for the public. There is a lot of information coming out daily and I appreciate all the efforts to try to educate our parents on what we know, how we are trying to respond and how we are trying to prepare for the coming school year.

G. Adjournment

Agenda Item:

G.1

Subject:	To adjourn the meeting
Motion Presented By:	Mr. Makowski
Motion Seconded By:	Ms. Rinaldi
Text of the Motion:	Madame Chair, I move that we adjourn.
Discussion:	None
Opposed:	None
Abstained:	None
Vote:	Motion Passes

The meeting adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mindi Davidson
Recording Secretary

Janelle Wilk
Secretary of the Board