

DENNIS-YARMOUTH REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Minutes of a School Committee Meeting
Monday, August 16, 2021

APPROVED

9-13-21

A Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School Committee meeting was held on Monday, August 16, 2021, at the Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High School Auditorium in South Yarmouth, Massachusetts.

Members Present: Jeni Landers, Chairperson; Joseph Tierney, Vice Chairperson; Phillip Morris, Treasurer; Jennifer Rose, Secretary; Joe Glynn; Tomas Tolentino; and Marilyn Bemis.

Others Present: Carol Woodbury, Superintendent of Schools; Maria Lopes, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services and Instruction; David Flynn, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations; Carole Eichner, Director of Early Learning; Kristin Dwyer, District Nurse Leader; Paul Funk, Principal, Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High School; Dr. Kenneth Colmer; and several members of the public.

At 5:32 p.m., Jeni Landers, Chairperson, called the meeting to order.

Reopening School

A. Mitigation Strategies

B. Masking

Kristin Dwyer, District Nurse Leader
Maria Lopes, Assistant Superintendent
Carol Woodbury, Superintendent

Mrs. Woodbury began the presentation on the reopening of school. The first day of school for students is September 1st; just 2 ½ weeks away. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education requires that all Massachusetts schools are required to be in-person, full-time, five days a week. Cape Cod is doing well with vaccinations with over 70% of those eligible vaccinated. For students who are eligible, Dennis has 48% vaccinated; Yarmouth has 50% vaccinated. Most people agree with the requirement to return to in-person learning. By federal public health order, all students and staff are required to wear masks on school buses and in school health offices. Due to the importance of in-person learning, schools should implement physical distancing to the extent possible within their structures but should not exclude students from in-person learning to keep a minimum distance requirement. Opening safely includes continuing some mitigation practices from last year including ventilation on buses and in classrooms; air purifiers; hand hygiene; continue with routine and targeted cleaning protocols. Outdoor playground equipment does not need to be cleaned between uses. Masks do not need to be worn outside.

Kristin Dwyer continued the presentation. Classroom cohorts will be continued to the extent possible. Non-essential visits to schools will be limited. We will continue to monitor ongoing community risk. Close contacts were discussed including exemptions from testing and quarantine protocols. Test and Stay and DESE recommendations include continued mask wearing in schools; updated classroom close contacts. The DESE recommendations support in-person learning.

The superintendent continued the presentation. The new rules for close contacts should work better this year. Test and Stay means the students remains in school.

Dr. Kenneth Colmer, Bass River Pediatrics and the Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District Doctor continued the presentation. Dr. Colmer supports all of the recommendations including masks.

Mrs. Woodbury closed the presentation with the following recommendations:

Continue with all mitigation procedures as outlined, including indoor masking;
Implement Test and Stay for all who want it;
Explore setting up vaccination clinics to help those who have been unable to get the vaccine easily;
Monitor community conditions at least monthly and revisit decisions as warranted.

Chair Landers began the question and answer period with a question about Test and Stay. Kristin Dwyer said it plan is in the initial stages but additional services, pooled testing, and the ability to swab twice are all included. There will be more information coming.

Joe Glynn took a moment to welcome new Assistant Superintendent David Flynn to the in-person meeting. Mr. Glynn asked if the district has received any updated directives. The superintendent said that they are strong recommendations. Discussion followed regarding the authority of superintendents to make these changes; revisiting the directive every thirty days; and ties to funding. Mr. Glynn asked if information is required from parents. Kristin Dwyer said that the district is notified of positive cases. Discussion of a possible survey followed. The superintendent added that we still have lots of sanitizer and PPE on hand.

Mr. Tolentino spoke in favor of the reopening plan. He said that despite several students having to quarantine last year this was no in-school spread. The superintendent confirmed this information. Kristin Dwyer pointed out that last year the students were 6 feet apart; this year that will not be the case.

Mr. Tierney asked about the close contact exemptions and spacing at schools, especially in the cafeteria. Mrs. Woodbury said that the round cafeteria tables will not work and that the students will probably eat in their classrooms.

Ms. Rose supports the plan and agrees it should be revisited every 30 days. She is concerned about spacing at the high school.

Ms. Bemis supports the plan and asked if there has been any increase in enrollment. The superintendent said that most came back in the spring when in-person learning resumed. Ms. Bemis said that as a former educator the safety and security of the students is most important. Students can be outdoors without masks. It's the marking of another year and we work with what we know.

Mr. Morris supports the plan; adding that it is fluid situation and respectful communication is very important.

The superintendent said it is time to look forward; noting the resilience of students. At a future meeting she would like to present regarding the many academic gains of students.

School Committee Business

Consent Agenda:

On a motion by Joseph Tierney, seconded by Joe Glynn, and carried unanimously 7-0, it was VOTED: To approve the following items as presented in the Consent Agenda:

Field Trip Approval:

Move to approve a Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High School Winter Percussion trip to Dayton, Ohio to compete at the Winter Guard International World Championship Finals; departing Tuesday, April 19, 2022 and returning Saturday, April 23, 2022.

Donations:

Move to accept a donation of a Precor Elliptical machine valued at approximately \$2000 from The Dennis Police Patrolman's Union to Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High School.

Move to accept a donation of two pallets of T8 bulbs from Upper Cape Cod Regional Technical High School as per Ms. Cashen's letter of August 5, 2021.

Surplus:

Move to declare as surplus ninety-seven outdated, obsolete, or otherwise worn-out books at the Ezra H. Baker Innovation School library per Mr. Depin's memo of July 23, 2021.

Move to declare as surplus three individual computer work stations and one long bookcase on wheels at Station Avenue Elementary School per Mr. Crowell's memo of August 3, 2021.

Minutes

July 19, 2021

Bills, Requisitions, and Payroll

Bills, requisitions, and payroll were signed by the School Committee.

Calendar

The upcoming calendar was included in the packet.

Items Distributed at the Meeting

Reopening School FY22 PowerPoint

Public Comment


Chair Landers opened the meeting to public comment noting that there will be 30 minutes allotted and each speaker would be limited to 3 minutes. Vida Morris had questions about a CRT program. Lynn Swanson has 2 daughters at the high school and she is against mask mandates. Sunny Fellman fully supports the return to school recommendations. Gina Maria spoke out against mask mandates. A gentleman spoke in favor of masks saying he doesn't want to put children at risk. Ms. Varinelli spoke in favor of masks; she thought that remote kindergarten worked very well last year. Diane Swanger (sp) spoke against mask mandates; mentioning the amount of false positives and the need to be seen and heard without masks. Zane Fitzgerald spoke in favor of the plan and gives his full support to the superintendent and the school committee.

Adjournment

At 6:44 p.m., on a motion by Marilyn Bemis, seconded by Tomas Tolentino, and carried 6-1 with Joe Glynn voting in opposition; it was

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting.

Minutes recorded and prepared by,


Eileen M. Whalen, Assistant Secretary