



Meeting Minutes #0727.20

MEDFIELD BOARD OF HEALTH

Meeting dated July 27, 2020

Members Present: Carol Read, Stephen Resch, Holly Rand, and Melissa Coughlin, members,

Also Present: Nancy Bennotti, Administrative Assistant; Kristine Trierweiler, Town Administrator; Jeffrey Marsden, School Superintendent, Kathy Thompson, RN, Cluster Leader / School Nurse.

Meeting was through Zoom teleconferencing.

Mrs Read recited authority by which this board is allowed to meet virtually and asked the board's members to introduce themselves. Meeting agenda: COVID-19 updates, operations, regulations/orders including an update on Medfield school reopening planning from Dr. Steve Resch, Board of Health member liaison on the District Advisory Committee and an update from Superintendent Jeff Marsden on the DESE social distancing guidance, Medfield Public Schools COVID-19 response planning, equipment purchases and timeline for completion and submission of required plans to DESE and the Medfield School Committee.

Mrs. Thompson, School Nurse Cluster Leader, reported that the summer school session began today with the special education students. Mrs. Thompson noted that working within the COVID-19 health and safety protocols was a challenge for everyone. DESE is expected to be providing guidelines under which school nurses will operate for school reopening which will be aligned with MDPH protocols. Mrs. Thompson stated that both she and the school physician, Dr. Laura McAuliffe prefer the hybrid model with a 6 foot physical difference as it would limit exposure within a smaller class size, a statement from Dr. McAuliffe was read.

Dr Marsden reported on recent DESE updates stating that today the state decreased the total required school year from 180 days to 170 days. The ten days will be used for additional safety training. Dr Marsden reviewed the preparations and purchases made through the CARES Act in order to facilitate the re-opening of school. Dr Marsden shared that another survey will be sent out to parents regarding bus times, starting times, etc. With restrictions on how many students can be transported by bus it may take multiple runs. With regard to using the bus, parents will be asked to make a commitment which will "reserve" a seat for that particular student for the entire year which would allow for more accurate planning. There has been a shift by the state to put re-opening under more local control with authority given to School Committees to vote on the final school district reopening plan presented by Superintendents. Groups of districts are working together to create consistency within geographic areas. One area of collaboration will assist teachers with school age children to balance their work day vs. their own children's school reopening requirements.

School leadership team is working on utilizing outside spaces and alternative classroom settings. There appears to be a consensus across the region that the 6 foot distance using the hybrid model seems to make the most sense. A brief overview of each school district's plan is due to DESE by this Friday, July 31st.

Dr Resch noted that there is a tension created with regard to physical distance with DESE advising 3 feet and the CDC recommending 6 feet. There are a number of factors which affect this decision and depending upon the age group, different scenarios within age groups may be more/less successful. It is also conditional upon the continued low incidence of cases in the town/county. Dr Resch noted that current scientific evidence is uncertain but does suggest there is a lower risk of transmission of COVID from children under the age of 10. He said he believes this age group would also benefit more from "in school" learning rather than "remote learning", as compared to older age children. He suggested a full in-person model for K-3 might be reasonable to try, even if students are spaced at less than 6 ft, as long as adults maintain a 6 foot distance. This would also assist with a parent's need to plan for care during the workweek. Older students would not be able to operate under this scenario as a hybrid model with 6 foot distance would be more comfortable for all involved, given that transmissibility from older students appears to be similar to adults, and in older grades, the students mix much more as they switch from class to class..

Dr Marsden, Mrs. Thompson and Dr Resch provided feedback to online participants' questions.

Dr Resch said he believes that the hybrid model with a 6 foot physical distance is a prudent way to start the school year. He noted that the COVID risk was reduced more because of the fewer number of children in school on a given day than the distance between them.

Mrs Read confirmed that no vote by the Board of Health is necessary but that this plan has the support of the Board of Health.

Miscellaneous

Mrs Rand made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 pm, Mrs Coughlin provided second and vote was by roll call, 4-0 unanimous, motion carried.

Meeting adjourned.

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August 31, 2020