

**Lenox Public Schools  
School Committee  
Via Remote Access  
November 19, 2020 @ 6:30pm**

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<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/74129481519?pwd=aEo1bElVMGxudlBTOFNtMVhFWjBUUT09>

Meeting ID: 741 2948 1519 Passcode: mockpwd

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Robert Vaughan, Robert Munch, Christine Mauro, David Rimmmler, Frances Sorrentino, Molly Elliot, Anne Marie O'Brien

**ALSO PRESENT:** William Cameron

**I. CALL TO ORDER. RV, Chair; 6:30 pm**

**II. HEARING OF VISITORS**

- Public comment. None.

**III. CORRESPONDENCE.** Letters from teachers regarding students attending school while family members awaiting test results. Level of attendance in person is declining, suggestions to move to remote/ Canvas learning.

**IV. BOARD REPORT**

- School Committee Meeting Minutes – November 9, 2020

**MOTION by CM and seconded by RM to approve SC meeting minutes of November 9, 2020.**

**CM: aye**

**DR: aye**

**FS: aye**

**RM: aye**

**RV: aye**

**Approved 5-0. Two abstain.**

**V. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

- Deliberation on appropriate administrative steps to take in light of the resurgence of COVID-19 in the region. Introduce Jim Wilusz DPH, in attendance at tonight's meeting. MOU established Joint Labor Management Commission, which meets weekly regarding infection rates, to ascertain the risk of having school open for instruction. Task force for reopening of lower grades to full time is to meet for the first time on 12.1. Now facing increasing infection/positivity rates. Current public health nurses are already quite busy keeping up with contact tracing. There are four options:
  1. Continue in hybrid. Wait and see option. Dwindling # of students now attending would continue following the holiday breaks.
  2. Remote after Thanksgiving, for 14 days of self-quarantine after the holiday break. Hybrid would resume December 14, with the holiday break after only 8 school days, and remote for two weeks once again after the break.
  3. Go fully remote November 23 and not resume until 2 weeks after the holiday break on January 19, 2021. Resumption of hybrid schedule would depend on local infection rates not having increased significantly.

4. Go to fully remote instruction until Novel Coronavirus is under control, presumably by widespread availability of a reliable vaccine.

DESE has, until this afternoon, urged school districts to remain open for in person learning. At today's meeting, DESE indicated districts should take reasonable actions based on local circumstances. WC proposed that Lenox Public Schools resume fully remote instruction from November 30 to Jan 15, and resume hybrid on November 19. Remote schedule will closely match current hybrid schedule.

RV: We have a recommendation from the Superintendent to move to remote learning.

**MOTION by DR and seconded by FS to resume fully remote instruction from November 30 to January 15, resuming hybrid schedule on January 19.**

Comment period: ME Lenox protocols are well thought out. Urged that we continue with the in person hybrid schedule but require any student who spends time with people outside of family to quarantine or present a negative test. Also, any students whose family member is waiting for a test result must attend remotely and not in person. A fifth option would be for younger learners at Morris to remain in hybrid and have LMMHS students attend remotely. RV indicated an amendment could be made to the motion to include ME suggestion(s). No such amendment was proposed. FS: In person attendance is dwindling. CM: Support Molly's proposals, LMMHS remote, Morris in person hybrid AO: I look at numbers weekly, people not following guidelines, don't want (kids) to be tested, not all will share plans for holidays. RV quoted current 14 day positivity rates in county.

RM: Let's hear from parents. CM: Let's hear from Jim Wilusz Chair of Tri Town Health. JW: Dialogue so far been excellent. Protocol in place to make decisions jointly with school districts, working together since March. Significant risk going in to the holiday season. Contact tracing system is taxed. Additional cases will delay this process. You can plan to go remote now in anticipation or go remote abruptly when situation presents itself. Parents who spoke: Rick Bleser, Oren Cass, Jenna Knauss, Meghan Kirby, Georgianne Valli-Harwood, and Lisa Nelson. Teachers: Michelle Johnson and Mary Cherry also spoke. RV addressed an inquiry via Chat about finding access to the meeting. Morris Nurse Kathleen Shove indicated there would be immediate shutdown with report of future cases. RM requested JLMC to indicate what their recommendation was at their last meeting. Anna Pettus indicated they voted unanimously to recommend closure through December 11. RM: We are faced with a choice to be proactive or reactive. CM: Appreciates comments from medical community and agree with statements. Agree with RM re: proactive vs. reactive. FS: Recommend to be proactive. RV: Current motion is to move to remote November 30 through January 15, returning to hybrid on January 19. A no vote might mean that you want to go with the JLMC recommendation of returning to hybrid on December 11, or that you want a different scenario for Morris than LMMHS, or something different altogether. ME: asked RV to share his thoughts. RV: Originally thought younger grades stay hybrid, but now after WC's comments, leaning to his recommendation of fully remote. WC portion of Special Education students would still receive services at school when not possible to do so remotely.

AO: aye

RM: aye

FS: aye

DR: aye

CM: nay

ME: nay

Approved 4-2.

- Discussion re: the employment of several additional staff for supervisory purposes in the event that we remain in hybrid or resume hybrid instruction if we close down in-person instruction for a specific period. Remarks on this topic were not made during the November 2 meeting due to focus of that meeting. Hybrid or full time in person instruction requires additional help due to the number of teachers, especially at LMMHS, teaching remotely which requires an adult to be present in the classroom to supervise the class. Melissa Falkowski has found funding for this

as part of the CARES Act funding, so no approval needed from School Committee at this time.

**VI. NEW BUSINESS**

**VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**VIII. SUBCOMMITTEES**

- Human Resources. Rolling back in to action shortly to determine those Superintendent candidates that will go forward. Putting together an interview team.
- Finance. Need to schedule a meeting.
- Teaching and Learning
- School Culture and Community Relations
- Governance and Leadership
- SBEF
- Strategic Planning. Still on schedule to present to SC in January with recommendations for the next 5 years.

**MOTION by RM and seconded by CM to adjourn:**

**ME: aye**

**CM: aye**

**DR: aye**

**FS: aye**

**AO: aye**

**RM: aye**

**RV: aye**

**Approved 7-0.**

**Meeting adjourned 8:24 pm.**

**DOCUMENTS IN PACKET:**

- School Committee meeting minutes – November 9, 2020
- CDC Holiday Celebrations
- Hoosac Valley Regional School District shifting to remote learning (Berkshire Eagle)
- COVID-19 testing demand up in Berkshires (Berkshire Eagle)
- The Checkup: 45 new COVID-19 cases in Berkshires (Berkshire Eagle)
- Wahconah Regional High School moves to remote learning (Berkshire Eagle)
- Are We Seriously Talking About Closing Schools Again? (New York Times)

**DOCUMENTS REFERENCED AT MEETING:**

- Superintendent's Report: Increasing Challenges Posed by Operating Schools with In-Person Attendance by Students & Staff

Submitted by *Amy Noble Novitzky*.