

**Lenox Public Schools**  
**School Committee**  
**Selectman's Room, Town Hall 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor**  
**AND via Remote Access**  
**August 16, 2021 @ 6:30pm**

To access meeting remotely: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84849095982?pwd=N0wxc2N6VE1QVDcvei9WYWZ5SIF6QT09>

Passcode: 008024 Webinar ID: 848 4909 5982

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Robert Vaughan, Veronica Fenton, Meghan Kirby, Robert Munch, Christine Mauro, David Rimmner, Oren Cass

**ALSO PRESENT:** Dr. Marc J. Gosselin Jr.

- I. **CALL TO ORDER.** 6:30 pm; RV, Chair. Meeting being held in hybrid fashion with members and some public in person, along with Zoom participants. All public comment limited to beginning of meeting, and only three minutes per speaker.

II. **HEARING OF VISITORS**

- Public comment. Starting with those attending in person. Erin Hicks, Kristen Moriarity, Jim Harwood, Georgianne Valli-Harwood, Sharon Mozian, Deb Cote, Bethany, Peter Strauss, Monica Joyce, Andrea Bruce, all encouraged requiring masking. Matthew Kropke: advice is to follow state DPH and DESE memo from July 30, which encourages promotion of vaccinations, and recommends that for those that are vaccinated masks be optional, this would encourage vaccinations.

- III. **CORRESPONDENCE.** Letters from Katie O'Neill, Hank Maimin, Shana Levine Senzel, Erin Hicks, Donna Lamke, Molly Elliot, Suzanne Keefe, Dr. Charles Wohl, Michelle Arseneau Allen, Carrie-Elise and Samuel Johnson, all encouraging/requesting masking.

IV. **BOARD REPORT**

- School Committee Meeting Minutes – August 9, 2021.

**MOTION by VF and seconded by RM to accept the minutes of August 9, 2021. Approved 7-0.**

V. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- COVID reopening policy discussion. RV made remarks about the current status of public input. EBCFA, the existing face covering policy is still in effect. Dr. Gosselin has provided an updated version of EBCFA. RV mentioned the number of masking policies that are already in place in other School Districts in the county, as well as in the Town of Lenox. MG: parent survey to gather opinions re: masking and other safety measures. Good representation of both schools in response. 228 felt vaccinations most effective, with 154 indicating masking is also effective to mitigate spread of COVID. Strong support for universal masking and/or masking for elementary students. Met with many health based individuals and organizations, all of whom recommended masking. Met with administrative team who was unanimous in recommending masking. Created a policy, based on MASC policy, regarding masking requirements for Lenox Public Schools. RV shared the current face covering policy, and asked for a motion to rescind the current policy. VF suggests amending the existing policy rather than rescinding it, or at least discussing what we want to do before voting to rescind. RV entertain a motion to adopt Dr. Gosselin's new EBCFA policy to replace the old policy EBCFA.

**MOTION by VF and seconded by CM to move to adopt the policy as recommended by Dr. Gosselin that contains specifics of masking based on his recitation of recommendations of a number of different authorities.**

OC initiated discussion re: public health meeting and the assessment of various risks. MG: Health officials indicated the risk now is particularly troubling; trends are heading in the wrong direction. OC: What is the threshold at which the risk becomes acceptable? MG: Medical experts not able to provide/agree on that threshold. CM: I will speak strongly in favor of policy presented by Dr. Gosselin. Considerable amount of feedback from many sources, all of which is in support of masking. Universal

masking is the right thing to do. MK: Talking about following appropriate guidelines. Would like to discuss preschool; WHO & UNICEF recommend preschoolers (students up to age 5) not to wear masks. CDC recommends masking for students in K-12. VF: Feels that because Preschool shares space in the K wing should also be masked. CM: Two students in PreK the last two years and LCC. Preschoolers at Morris complied with LPS masking policy last year, with no issues, complaints from students or teachers. Strongly opposed to exempting Preschool from the masking program. MG: ECE recommends masking for students two and over. Advice from organizations is changing. Discussion ensued regarding which sources of recommendations the Committee should consider. Discussion about pooled testing, especially for athletes. RV: High rate of participation in pooled testing would help us determine next steps.

OC proposed an Amendment to the policy:

**This policy will be in effect whenever the county is classified by the CDC as in a state of substantial spread or higher, to be reviewed weekly by the administration. To be placed in the policy at the end of the section regarding masking, prior to pooled testing.**

Would allow us to make decisions on a rational and data based basis and modeling and communicating that to our children as well. We are not actually thinking rationally about risk. Open to whatever quantified approach we want to take. For point of reference, the CDC threshold is 50 cases per 100,000 persons and a positive test rate of 8% in the last seven days. Data is updated daily.

**Amendment seconded by MK.**

Discussion ensued regarding SC's ability vs the JLMC's ability to establish the thresholds. VF recommends keeping this topic on the agenda for future meetings. Is opposed to this amendment. DR: Cannot support this amendment. RV called for a vote on the amendment.

**Amendment failed 2-5.**

**Amendment by OC to limit the policy to PreK to Grade 6 but not the high school. Amendment not seconded.**

**Original motion approved 6-1.**

RV: next discussion regarding (requiring) vaccinations. Would involve negotiating with LEA. Members discussed how many staff may already be vaccinated, circumstances where staff would not be comfortable being vaccinated, two largest teachers' organization have issued positions recommending vaccinations for staff. RV: Perhaps we can come back at the August 30 meeting with a proposed vaccination policy.

## VI. SUBCOMMITTEES

Subcommittee	Strategic Plan Section	Strategic Plan Section	Strategic Plan Section
Governance & Leadership	Leadership		
Human Resources	Leadership	Diversity, Equity & Inclusion	Professional Development
Teaching & Learning	Curriculum & Instruction	Diversity, Equity & Inclusion	Professional Development
Teaching & Learning (cont'd)	Technology	Social Emotional Learning	Leadership
Teaching & Learning (cont'd)	Facilities		
School Culture/	Social Emotional Learning	Diversity, Equity & Inclusion	Facilities
Community Relations			
Finance	Finance	Technology	Facilities

**MOTION by VF and seconded by CM to adjourn the meeting. Approved 7-0.**  
**Meeting adjourned 8:21 pm.**

## IX. DOCUMENTS IN PACKET

- School Committee Meeting Minutes – August 9, 2021
- Correspondence re: masking in schools

## X. DOCUMENTS PROVIDED AT MEETING

- Draft revised policy EBCFA Face Covering

Submitted by *Amy Noble Novitsky*.