

**Mansfield School Committee Meeting
Minutes for Tuesday, March 9, 2021
Virtual Meeting using GoToWebinar**

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An **Open Meeting** of the Mansfield School Committee was held virtually on Tuesday, March 9, 2021. The open meeting session was called to order by Kiera O'Neil at 7:33 pm.

Members Present:

Kiera O'Neil
Lynn Cavicchi
Lauren Scher
Jenn Walsh
Linda Fernando

Administration Present:

Teresa Murphy, Superintendent of Schools
Michael Connolly, Assistant Superintendent (Teaching/Learning)
Edward Donoghue, Assistant Superintendent (Finance/Operations)

Members Absent: None

***** All votes taken by roll call vote *****

Roll Call:

Kiera O'Neil	aye
Lynn Cavicchi	aye
Jenn Walsh	aye
Linda Fernando	aye
Lauren Scher	aye

Public Speak: Public Speak is open for 15 minutes for anyone who has registered via GoToWebinar.

Nicole Benoit, 14 Bonney Lane expressed her concern that virtual remote students may be faced with the possibility of changing teachers when we move forward with a return to school plan. This would be an unfortunate outcome for these students who are very comfortable with their teachers. Chair O'Neil noted that we would address this in tonight's presentation.

Communications:

The committee received two letters requesting the district to petition the state to cancel MCAS this year.

New Business:**Consideration of DESE Commissioner's Requirement to return to 5 days per week in-person learning:**

Superintendent Murphy opened the discussion by explaining the use of "Emergency Open Session." This follows open meeting law where we are normally unable to post a meeting 48 hours ahead of time. On Friday afternoon, March 5th, DESE met and adopted amendments to the Student Learning time authorizing Commissioner Riley the authority to determine when hybrid and remote models of instruction will no longer count toward Student Learning Time. In response, the district met on Monday and made the determination that a school committee meeting was needed. We posted the meeting under MGL for a meeting to be held within 48 hours of posting and advertised through social media and our website.

Assistant Superintendent Connolly began the presentation by reviewing what has occurred over the last few weeks. Bus transportation guidelines have been relaxed and the Commissioner has mandated elementary school students back to school by April 5th and grades 6 - 8 students back to school by April 28th.

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Although the Commissioner is allowing a slower approach for middle school students, Mansfield feels that we are in a position to be ready for April 5th. This is due to the fact that we started to review back-to-school plans in January and proposed a gradual return to school that started on March 1st. We are altering our plans to be an "all at once" return. Mansfield High School is excluded from this plan while we work on our logistics and wait for further guidance from DESE.

We intend to communicate our plans out to families through newsletters, virtual meetings, our website and social media. We will also communicate and work with staff on their needs for a successful return.

To reiterate, Mansfield has been hard at work on return to school plans. We have worked with teachers and administrators, transportation, food services, facilities, spacing, etc. We feel that with these efforts we are prepared to move forward.

Teresa Murphy emphasized that those students currently in the virtual remote cohort can remain there for the remainder of the year if they so choose. We anticipate a small number of families will make changes from remote to in-person or vice versa. If there were to be a large number of changes we would evaluate our allocation of staff and students.

Families will begin to receive information from schools this week explaining the process of choosing the back to school plan for their students.

Questions/Answers:

Can we provide a preview of transportation preparations? Teresa responded that we will allow families to now sign up for the bus if they have not used transportation in the past. There will be a reduced rate which will be approved by school committee on 3-16-21. The state has increased capacity while directing buses to open windows. We feel we can run within the capacities but if any changes are needed at the secondary level we will make slight modifications to routes.

Teresa also noted that there have been a lot of things in play since last year. In August, we had to provide 3 return to school plans for the state. As such, we are using some of that research and logistics to build our new models. Although we were given the directive to start back on April 5th, we were already working towards a slow return to school. Tonight, our purpose is to present our time frames. We will continue our efforts and continue negotiations with our unions.

What is the status of vaccines for educators? As we understand there are meetings occurring between Governor Baker and Commissioner Riley to detail a plan for vaccinating teachers. We hope to hear tomorrow. We do know that starting on 3/11 teachers can start registering through the state system. CVS started allowing teachers to register through their federal system last week. We know that some of our staff have already been able to secure appointments.

Will families be allowed to switch cohorts after April 5th? Yes, we have since day one allowed families to change cohorts. It does take time for us to make the change. All families will choose full in-person or full remote starting on April 5th. If there is a need for a family to change after that point we will work with them.

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In fact, one of the reasons we want to move quickly on QMS is that there is a long list of families asking that their students attend the daily cohort. These requests are reviewed very closely with teachers, counselors, administrators and families to make these determinations. We have moved several students to this cohort but we are running out of capacity. By going 5 days per week we remove the need for the current daily cohort.

How will we support our students who are coming from the full remote model to the in person model? Teresa noted that we are very aware of the adjustments that students are facing and we are working on several models to offer supports. We are already in conversations with Dr. Lisa Gallagher and Dr. Sheryl Davis with whom we already work on student supports. We hope to use Esser II money to fund these efforts. This is just one example of our plans.

Do we have a time line for surveys? We hope to get all these out to families this week. Lynn noted the importance of communicating to parents what we know so they have the background needed to make decisions. For example are we looking at 3 feet or 4 feet? Teresa indicated that we are going back using the 3 feet minimum as guided by the State. There are a lot of moving parts and we will get as much information out as possible. Many parents will be able to make a decision right away. For others we will be able to provide information during virtual meetings and individual conversations. Teresa will send a newsletter to families tomorrow.

Have we already notified our unions? Yes, this was discussed during a meeting with union leadership on Monday.

Will students be offered an opportunity to ask questions? Yes, students will be given the opportunity to hear our plans and ask questions.

All members expressed their gratitude for the hard work put forward toward this plan.

Kiera asked for a motion to move forward with bringing our students back to school.

Motion to Support the transition of Grade 6 - 8 students along with elementary students to 5 full days of in-person learning on April 5th by Linda Fernando / Jenn Walsh.

Roll Call Vote:

Lynn Cavicchi	aye
Jenn Walsh	aye
Kiera O'Neil	aye
Linda Fernando	aye
Lauren Scher	aye

Motion Passes: 5 - 0

Other- Items not anticipated by the Chair 48 hours prior to this meeting: None

Documents Referenced:

Mansfield's Return to School Presentation

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Motion to adjourn: At 8:34 p.m., **Motion** to adjourn the open meeting by Linda Fernando / Jenn Walsh

Roll Call vote:

Lauren Scher	aye
Linda Fernando	aye
Kiera O'Neil	aye
Jenn Walsh	aye
Lynn Cavicchi	aye

Motion Carries 5 - 0

Respectfully Submitted,
Diane Nugent, Secretary to the
Superintendent & School Committee