

Virtual Buildings and Grounds Sub-Committee Report
Wednesday, September 28, 2022
Broadcast from the Media Arts Studio
454 Broadway, Cambridge, MA

Called for the purpose of discussing socializing the latest changes to COVID Protocols, updates on the Long-Range Building study, sharing policies being considered for review during the school year and prioritizing and incorporating them into the subcommittee's schedule.

Sub-Committee Members Present: Member Rojas, Chair; Member Fantini, Member Bhambi (Absent)

Others present: Dr. Turk, Deputy Superintendent; Vedad Konjic, Facilities Director

The meeting started at 6:00 p.m. Member Rojas was in the chair.

Chair Rojas began the meeting by reading the call and outlined the shared the goals of the meeting:

- Hear about current updates to the health & safety protocols being considered.
- Review the status of the RFP for the Long-Range Building study
- Set Agenda for the rest of the school year with regards to policy review goals
- Provide an opportunity for community members to ask questions and ideas on these topics to the administration, the health & safety working group, and others

In the event of Hurricane Ian, the meeting began with an ice-breaker, and attendee discussed their experiences with hurricanes and what comes to mind when they hear the word hurricane.

After the ice-breaker, **Chair Rojas** turned the meeting over to Dr. Turk for a [presentation](#). Dr. Turk presented recent updates to the COVID protocols.

Following the presentation, **Chair Rojas** opened the meeting up for questions and discussions.

Member Fantini asked Dr. Turk for clarification on updated mitigation strategies regarding booster shots and if the drop in the booster requirement applies to clubs and other after-school activities alongside sports.

- Dr. Turk clarified any individual who participates in before and after-school activities including clubs and sports are no longer required to have a booster shot.

Member Fantini asked for clarification on the data on employee vaccinations and if the district is tracking staff vaccination and booster rates.

- Dr. Turk confirmed that the district is still documenting the employee vaccination rate. The district is currently between 84 – 86% employee vaccination compliance. Dr. Turk also clarifies that the district is not tracking the booster rate of staff the same way they are tracking initial vaccination rates.

Chair Rojas agreed that the updated mitigation strategies and changes are feasible and made given the current climate of the coronavirus and agrees that the focus should be on encouraging the district to have up-to-date on their vaccines. He asked Dr. Turk and Dr. Dobberteen that if the end goal for the district is to encourage everyone to be up-to-date with vaccines then what is the benefit of still requiring full vaccination?

- Dr. Turk and Dr. Dobberteen clarified that there is a difference between being “fully vaccinated” and “up-to-date”. Fully vaccinated means that an individual received the first two doses of the COVID vaccine (one if Johnson&Johnson). Up-to-date means that an individual has not only received their initial vaccines but also the recommended booster shots.

Chair Rojas inquired about the masking and the recommended timeline for mask requirements for students/staff in a classroom with 3 or more positive COVID cases.

- Dr. Turk clarified that masking will not be long-term and the timeline would be around five to six days from exposure.

Chair Rojas opened the meeting to community members for their questions and comments.

- Elinor Actipis asked for clarification on the reasoning for mandating vaccines but not the booster shots
 - Dr. Dobberteen clarified that the reasoning is because the initial vaccine is designed to prime the immune system to the coronavirus. The district thinks it is best to take a measured approach to encourage people to get the initial vaccine requirement
- Edward Moyer asked for further clarification about the reasoning for mandating the vaccines for other activities that are not considered higher-risk activities.
- Jamie Lichtenstein inquired about School Committee and administration encouragement regarding utilizing outdoors as a lunch option
 - Dr. Turk clarified that there will be a district communication on the presentation data shared at tonight's meeting which encourages the administration to utilize outdoors and the tents while the weather permits.

Chair Rojas turned the meeting over to Vedad Konjic for an update on the Long-Range Building study.

Vedad Konjic provided an update on the study. The DLR group was chosen to do the analysis. The study will involve ten schools which include: Amigos, Baldwin, Cambridgeport, Fletcher Maynard Academy, Graham & Parks, Haggerty, Kennedy Longfellow, Morse School, Peabody School, and Rindge Avenue Upper School. The study includes the following three scopes: facilities assessment, capacity analysis/expansion potential, and will conclude with recommendations for renovations/expansions at three of the ten schools. Vedad Konjic provided an updated project timeline. The facilities assessment scope of the study has already begun and is expected to continue throughout October and maybe into November. The capacity analysis/expansion potential is the next phase and can take about 3 ½ months since a lot of the capacity analysis consists of on-site work with a concluded timeline of March. The master plan scope has a tentative start time around March/April and a tentative completed date by June/ At the end of each scope, the DLR will provide a comprehensive report of their findings.

After the presentation, **Chair Rojas** turned the meeting over to other Sub-Committee members for their questions and comments.

Member Fantini inquired about the scope of work and ongoing work on the Tobin School and if the expansion work is dependent on the completion of the work at the Tobin School.

- Vedad Konjic confirmed that the work will begin once the swing space at the Longfellow is available and the work on the Tobin School is completed

Chair Rojas asked about clarification on the master plan and if it is just for capital expenses (facilities) and how it ties in with the maintenance budget that the School Committee votes on.

- Vedad Konjic confirmed that the master plan is only for capital expenses. Capital expenses are funded through the city and gave examples of what types of projects would be considered capital expenses.

Chair Rojas transitioned the meeting for a discussion on four policies for review for this school year: student transportation, additions of safety procedures and programs (i.e. addition of active shooter training and drills), facilities development goals, and controlled choice.

- Dr. Turk mentioned that the first of the four policies to review first based on immediate need would be student transportation. She also mentioned that controlled choice would be the policy that would take the longest to review.
- Vedad Konjic clarified that there are ongoing safety efforts that include training and active shooting drills and gave examples of ongoing safety measures that have been and are being implemented throughout the district.

Chair Rojas highlighted the next steps regarding the review of the policies with student transportation being prioritized first, followed by safety measures. Controlled choice and facilities development goals will be discussed in the second half of the year.

Chair Rojas adjourned the meeting at 7:31 pm.