

Virtual Meeting of the Buildings and Grounds Sub-Committee  
Friday, December 4, 2020  
Broadcast from the Media Arts Studio  
454 Broadway, Cambridge, MA

Called for purpose of discussing safety policies and the health metrics to ensure they reflect the disproportionate risk of COVID-19 to some communities and as part of the plan for expanding in-person learning.

Members Present: Member Rojas, Chair; Vice Chair Bowman; Member Fantini

Others Present: Mayor Siddiqui; James Maloney, Chief Operating Officer

Member Rojas started the meeting at 4:00 pm. Member Rojas shared the goals of the meeting:

- Discussing safety policies and the health metrics to ensure they reflect the disproportionate risk of COVID-19 to some communities and as part of the plan for expanding in-person learning.
- Provide opportunity for community members to ask questions and ideas on these topics to Administration, Scientists and Public Health Representatives.

Member Rojas shared community questions:

- How are we ensuring that individual schools are adhering to the current safety policies? And how can we help those schools that might have questions/trouble adhering to some of the policies?
- Should we reconsider the policy that allows people that travel out of state to return to the schools if they test negative? Should we consider asking them to quarantine for 7 days with a negative test or 10 days with no test?
- Should we consider adjusting our safety policies for the dryer winter air? For example, should schools be using humidifiers in their rooms or opening windows in between periods?

Member Fantini wanted to talk about the new guidelines for quarantining.

Mr. Maloney shared an update from the working group and that they've discussed three subjects:

- 3 foot distancing at elementary levels
- 3 foot level at middle school levels - discussion to continue - but more testing could be helpful in getting people comfortable.
- Quarantine guidance

Conversation followed on the 3 foot distance. Member Fantini also shared that he heard from teachers of the three foot distancing.

Ms. Preval asked Member Fantini to clarify his comments on teacher support. Member Fantini answered that it was during negotiations.

Ms. Cranton discussed the challenges of thinking about this change in the context and that eating is going to be a huge issue. And the importance of bringing scholars back safely.

Dr. Jenkins talked about how three foot distance is for the elementary and the importance of having teachers as part of the conversation.

Dan Mohanan talked about the interconnectedness of these issues and provided more context on teachers talking about three foot distancing. If we are relaxing the distancing, we need to increase other mitigation strategies such as CO2 testing.

Jenny Chung discussed the importance of listening to educator experiences.

Ms. Rosenberg shared her experience as an educator. If CPS is going to change quarantine policies and distancing policies. People feel very nervous right now.

Mr. Maloney echoed the sentiments that it is hard to be having this conversation right now but we need to plan. He talked about how the safety manual is a working document. He provided further context on the cases that happened.

Alicia Outing, an educator, shared her experience in regard to quarantine.

Member Rojas asked if the change in the distancing is going to be brought before the School Committee. Member Rojas moved the conversation along to middle schools and why the recommendation is not happening there.

- Dr. Jenkins provided context that younger children are less likely to transmit.

Mr. Maloney turned the conversation over to quarantine guidance.

- Ms. Rose-Tynes discussed the differences between CDC and the state of Massachusetts. She talked about how they want the messaging to be consistent with the contract tracing. The Health Department adopted the new guidelines, she said that does not jive with CPS. She discussed ten days symptom free, 8 days with a test. She discussed how parents want to have their children in school. She also discussed the fourteen-day option without a test.
- Member Rojas asked for clarification on if they travel outside the state, you can go back to the classroom.

Vice Chair Bowman discussed her experience as a parent and we need to explore the conversation more from the short term and we can figure out the new guidelines for a future policy to bring students back safely. The in and out has been very difficult.

Dan Monahan how medical/religious exemptions work in this situation. If someone has a religious exemption can they come back for 10 days without a test or would they have to do 14 days?

- Ms. Kaplan clarified that they would have to do the 14 days.
- Dan Monahan spoke to the operation challenges of tracking quarantine periods.

Ms. Cranston asked for clarification on the meeting notice that safety policies/health metrics and where that conversation is fitting in.

Ms. Kaplan provided more information on the changes in quarantine and how they track.

Member Rojas asked for further clarification on the changes from 14 to 10.

Ms. Rose-Tynes talked about how the state and CDC try to work together. They talked about how day 5 is the average incubation period, by day 9 you probably won't. The state is basing this as science.

Dr. Lichtenstein talked about having a test day nine is safer than fourteen-day quarantine with no test. She emphasized the importance of testing.

Mr. Maloney talked about the issues with translating and the messages to be clear.

Sarah Rosenberg talked about how this is going to exasperate the relationship between educators and families.

- Mr. Maloney said they are not asking for the School Committee on the quarantine piece, he just wanted people to understand the mismatch of the guidance.

Member Rojas opened the meeting to other Sub-Committee members.

- Mr. Maloney clarified that they do want the Sub-Committee to bring forward the distance recommendation
- The Mayor clarified that they are looking at February for re-opening. Are there any mitigation strategies that exist such as pool testing to help us plan for expansion? She discussed the need to be collaborative.

Jo Quest-Neubert discussed moving forward the educators would be involved in the beginning.

- Mr. Maloney discussed how the administration is meeting with teachers.

Vice Chair Bowman talked about how we are communicating from the CDC and the importance of clear messaging.

Member Rojas adjourned the meeting at 6:36 p.m.

Attest:



Allison Daley  
Confidential Secretary to the Office of the School Committee