

Virtual Buildings and Grounds Sub-Committee Report  
Friday, October 30, 2020  
Broadcast from the Media Arts Studio  
454 Broadway, Cambridge, MA

Called for the purpose of discussing the COVID-19 Safety & Facilities Manual and the health metrics of the reopening data dashboard. It is anticipated that this meeting will end no later than 1:00 p.m.

Members Present: Chair José Luis Rojas Villarreal, Vice Chair Manikka Bowman, Member Fantini

Also Present: Mayor Siddiqui, Member Weinstein, Member Wilson, Member Rachel, James Maloney, Chief Operating Officer, Joanne Johnson, Operations Assistant, Vedad Konjic, Facilities Director, Maisha Rounds, Fletcher Maynard Principal, Principal Sarah Marrero of Amigos, Robin Harris, Family Engagement and Partnerships, Rowan Marcus, IT, Maureen MacFarlane, Legal Counsel, B Kim, Educational Liaison & Policy Advisor to Mayor's Office, Tracy Rose-Tynes, Nurse Manager for School Health Services, Interim Associate Chief, Dr. Jill Crittenden and Dr. Jaime Liechtenstein, Dan Monahan, Caitlin Taylor, Mass Design Group, Dave Armstrong, CPSD, Anna Kaplan, Cambridge Public Health and Dr. Helen Jenkins

Chair Rojas began the meeting at 11:00am with reading the notice to participate and introductions as well as going over the agenda.

He proceeded to give a synopsis and context around the meeting: Revise the current health metrics of the Reopening Dashboard and consider updating them based on new knowledge and the availability of more detailed data, and discuss the language around lunch in the COVID-19 Safety & Facilities Manual. Provide opportunity for community members to ask questions and ideas on these topics to Administration, Scientists and Public Health Representatives. As well as community questions:

- What metrics related to higher risk populations can we consider?
- Should we continue to open windows during winter, even if just for a couple of minutes each hour
- What can we do to close other sectors of the economy in order to provide a better chance for schools to remain open?
- What new metrics are we considering to bring more students into the classrooms safely? - Ask Jim when the working group will next meet to discuss this.

Chair Rojas yielded the floor to Jim Maloney, Chief Operating Officer, CPSD to speak about the potential metrics change.

Jim Maloney gave a brief history on the proposed conversation and informed the panel that there is conversation to expand in person learning as well. Asked Tracey Rose Tynes to speak on testing.

Tracey Rose Tynes remarked that testing is going well. No students have tested positive. Only one in-person student has tested positive, but happened outside school. There have been a couple of remote students that have also tested positive. Informed the panel that 1600 COVID test have been done in schools, 28 for symptomatic students. None have not come back positive. Very encouraged by the results and shares that schools are a safe place to be. There are a handful of positive cases with the remote students. The masking, washing hands and social distancing are working.

Vice Chair Bowman asked a clarifying question about the one positive case and its context.

- Tracey Rose Tynes answered that the positive test was not tested in school and happened outside of school.

Dr. Helen Jenkins wanted to highlight the difference, cases will come up, the point is that they are being identified. There needs to be a reminder that is different from than transmission. Goes on to speak in depth on the letter, written with Bradley Bernstein, MD PhD; Jill Crittenden, PhD; Helen Jenkins, PhD; Jamie Liechtenstein, PhD; Keith Marzilli Ericson, PhD, that will be used to explain the updated metric proposal.

Dr. Jaime Lichtenstein echoed what Dr. Jenkins explained to the group and praised her summary. Encouraged staff to take advantage of surveillance testing. Over all it seems that this program is successful. Complements the Public Health Department for their diligence and hard work.

Dr. Jill Crittenden agreed with what her colleagues have said and reminded that safety measures are in place in the schools.

Catherine Reilly, a parent, commented that schools are not spreading COVID 19, wanted to know how the in person learning will be expanded.

Member Fantini spoke on the timeliness on the metric change. He proceeded to ask about wastewater testing and when is the timeframe? Followed up with greater testing of older students? There needs to be discussions of a return to school plan. Was curious that some schools have a fourth metric would Cambridge consider that?

- Jim Maloney broke down the metrics of Cambridge and surrounding communities. There has been the beginning process of getting the working group together to start speaking about the expansion of in person learning.

Tracey Rose Tynes, introduced Anna Kaplan to speak on the metrics

- Anna Kaplan answered and reminded the panel of the oscillating between the categories of cases. We need to look at who is getting testing and that included the college students and there are some nuances to these numbers.
- Mayor Siddiqui answered that the City is very close to the project being off the ground, working with MWRA to have this happen. The analysis will be happening hopefully early next week.
- Dr. Lichtenstein answered that the High School students should be the population. It should be a target based on the metrics of the day and could implement self-swab testing. A deeper conversation on what is the perfect age cutoff? That possibility of a fourth metric should be a community based discussion.

Dr. Jill Crittenden wanted to add to the conversation one of the additional metrics that we have is surveillance testing and is a crucial metric.

Vice Chair Bowman wanted a clarity on the following does it make sense to have Cambridge Based Metrics as opposed to a regional based system? Aligning resources and have a better picture of risk from the other communities represented by staff? Wanted to clarify on a metric of focusing on the children of BIPOC and making determination of when schools are safe, is concerned for internal bias.

- Dr. Lichtenstein answered that the ideal way if we were thinking of weighing the proposal to list the testing of the scholars and compare to the surrounding cities and town and compare. There is consideration that should be incorporated and that overall numbers are broken down by count way. Not driven by Boston. A super spreader even in another town could impact the numbers. Reminds the average person may not infect people, a super spreader could affect multiples and that would drive transmission. As for the concern for BIPOC potential metric it's possible that communities that may feel disenfranchised. Would always like to see more testing in impacted communities. Thinks about the degrees of the metrics and the publicizing of them
- Dr. Helen Jenkins commented on that Cambridge's data is such good quality data, as well as the resources provided by the City, that we can keep up with our information.
- Dr. Crittenden reminded that wastewater testing is not looking at the bias and testing 95% of the Cambridge population that live and work. By having Cambridge based metrics we can evaluate the danger of the work place for the teacher.
- Anna Kaplan remarked that it is a challenge for creating and observing data and definitely worth a conversation to expand on this topic.

Chair Rojas clarified that people that are of higher risk be tested.

Vice Chair Bowman wanted a recommendation to the School Committee to separate out the conversation about broader metrics related to COVID 19 speak of community centric metrics that larger metrics do not stigmatize cohorts of individuals.

Jim Maloney remarked on the over 1200 employees trying to tie in where employees reside. There needs to a conversation before we consider weighing other communities.

Chair Rojas wanted to speak about the potential language revision about encouraging people to eat outside.

- Dr. Lichtenstein stated lunch outdoors unless it is not safe to do so would be her proviso.

Member Weinstein advocated for more outdoor activity and reminding of it benefits.

Vice Chair Bowman wanted discretion when speaking about the lunch and outdoors. It should be the determined by the Principals.

- Principal Rounds agreed that there should be flexibility in taking into consideration what the weather conditions are.
- Tracey Rose Tynes suggested the same protocol that is in place for recess?
- Jim Maloney questioned the weather and the differences between 30/40 degree and eating.
- Dr. Crittenden there needs to be a balance and always proper ventilation. Reminded that the teachers breakroom is a concern for her.

Member Wilson asked about the 1600 tested and are they repeating testing or are they are being tested just once?

- Tracey Rose Tynes does not have that information but observed that more pare getting twice weekly.
- Anna Kaplan answered that people on an average are getting tested twice a week. Accessing results are much easier once registered.
- Jim Maloney anecdotally commented on the ease and the noninvasive process of testing.

Abigail Klima, parent, wanted clarity on the process and timeline to changes to the metrics for the City.

- Chair Rojas explained that the recommendation would come from the committee and would have a follow up meeting Mayor Siddiqui and then it would be brought to the School Committee.

Dan Monahan expressed thanks to the committee members and commented that the timing of the meeting is problematic for teachers. Asked about the proposals, could they be public, is the only change to use Cambridge only data? There needs to a very clear rationale for the reasoning for the proposal of the metrics change. Would like better data on what percentages of teachers are being tested.

- Dr. Lichtenstein answered that change is to the first two metrics, the third (wastewater) metric would be based on seven day averages.

Sarah Rosenberg, CEA Health Safety Committee, asked could the number of cases be put on our dashboard, better the transparency and who is reporting the numbers? Remarked about the timing of the meeting and the inconvenience to their schedules.

Vice Chair Bowman acknowledged the timing is not advantageous and agreed.

- Jim Maloney explained that the number comes from the Superintendent's Office which comes from the MWRA and the Cambridge Department of Public Health. Reminded the panel the balance of privacy and notification.
- Dr. Lichtenstein strongly suggested that CPSD add the cases to the dashboard, DPH could potentially add to the dashboard.
- Tracey Rose Tynes agreed to adding the information to the dashboard for clarity and the positive outlook for the community. Acknowledged the privacy issue.

Member Weinstein wanted clarity for the proposed revision, we know it is based on surveillance testing is there a threshold for that?

- Dr. Jenkins answered she does not have that information.
- Dr. Crittenden expressed the importance of the teacher testing.
- Dan Monahan and Sarah Rosenberg agreed and expressed an interest to push the teacher testing.

- Jim Maloney gave a brief synopsis for the past several weeks of testing.

Chair Rojas asked the members if they were in agreement to recommendation to have the School Committee look at the revised metrics.

Sub-Committee Members agreed to the recommendations to send forth to the School Committee.

Dr. Lichtenstein spoke about linking these metrics not just to schools, but on a city wide enterprises and those levels be indicative for determinations for other buildings.

Dr. Helen Jenkins echoed what Dr. Lichtenstein expressed.

Mayor Siddiqui informed the panel of the City's testing efforts and how it will be expanded.

Dan Monahan echoed Dr. Lichtenstein's concerns with the rise of numbers and the effect on other business and advocated that the Governor take action to close other business based on the numbers in order to keep schools open.



Letter\_from\_External\_  
Scientific Advisors\_m

Chair Rojas asked the committee members to revise the language concerning the language regarding lunch.

Chair Rojas reviewed next steps: Recommend approval of local health metrics to the School Committee. Recommend change to the language around lunch in the safety & facilities manual to recommend eating lunch outside, but not require it. Set up Building & Grounds Subcommittee meetings after school hours to discuss impact of metrics on people of color and metrics to consider bringing more students into classrooms safely.

Adjourned 1:00pm

Attest:

Jennifer Dever Wood  
Cambridge School Committee