Virtual Buildings and Grounds Sub-Committee Report

Monday, July 26, 2021

Broadcast from the Media Arts Studio

454 Broadway, Cambridge, MA

Called for the purpose to discuss recommendations from the Safety & Health Working Group for the start of the school year in the autumn. This meeting will end by or before 8:00 p.m.

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

Others present: James Maloney, Chief Operating Officer; Dr. Turk, Deputy Superintendent

Member Rojas started the meeting at 6:00 p.m. and outlined the meeting: there will be a discussion on the scientific advisors’ recommendations on public health and protocol components. Public comment will be framed as a Q&A.

Member Rojas shared two community questions:

* What has changed that we feel we now need masks indoors for vaccinated people?
* What would need to happen for us to consider not needing to use masks indoors?

Mr. Maloney provided background on the decisions that have been made and then started his presentation: Safety/Facilities Procedure Manuel Revision for SY 2021-2022.

Member Rojas turned the meeting over to Dr. Doberteen.

* Dr. Doberteen provided an update on the masking, there is a strong recommendation for children to wear masks. She discussed the delta variant.

Juliet Jacobson discussed her personal experience with taking her children to Sweden.

Member Rojas turned the meeting over to other Sub-Committee members for questions.

Vice Chair Bowman asked for clarification on eating protocols

* Mr. Maloney shared that the plan for the fall is for students to eat outside.

Dr. Doberteen shared Cambridge vaccination rates and the goal is to get kids back in schools.

* Dr. Khan agreed with Dr. Doberteen on having all children wearing masks and provided more background on the decision.

Member Fantini asked for clarification on waivers to stay home.

* Mr. Maloney confirmed there is not a waiver tied to COVID.

Dr. Nehs discussed how COVID is a seasonal virus and there will be other variants. He advocated for N-95 masks.

* Dr. Khan discussed how the decisions made in the fall, will not be permanent and there is room to change.
* Richard Younger discussed how there are a large number of immune-compromised individuals and schools should be safe. He advocated for the masking policy.

Member Rojas asked for clarification on quarantine for positive cases.

* Dr. Doberteen confirmed there has not been a determination made yet for the fall.

Amanda Beatty discussed how the conversation should be centered around keeping schools open.

Sanjoy Mahajan advocated against the students wearing a mask.

Discussion continued on masking.

Dan Monahan echoed Ms. Beatty’s sentiments that the goal should be to keep school opens and confirmed there is currently no option for remote learning in DESE guidelines.

Elinor Actipis advocated for children not wearing cloth masks.

Member Rojas clarified that this meeting was just for asking questions and there will be no votes tonight and the recommendation will be brought before the Committee of the Whole. He also clarified that the decision made by the School Committee, they will revisit based on information collected in the next few months.

Member Rojas adjourned the meeting at 7:44 p.m.

Attest :



Allison Daley

Confidential Secretary to the Office of the School Committee