

Virtual Building and Grounds Sub-Committee Report
Wednesday, January 26, 2022
Broadcast from the Media Arts Studio

Called for the purpose of discussing current updates to the health & safety protocols being considered, including the state's new at-home rapid testing program, the mask mandate, travel protocol, allow outside permit holders in gyms, as well as continue to discuss the outlook of the protocols as it continues to appear we will not eradicate COVID-19. Broadcast from the Media Arts Studio

Members Present: Chair Jose Luis Rojas, Member Fantini, Member Bhambi

Others Present: Mayor Siddiqui; Member Wilson; Dr. Carolyn Turk, Deputy Superintendent; Vedad Konjic, Director of Facilities

Chair Rojas called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm. Member Rojas outlined the goals:

- Hear about current updates to the health & safety protocols being considered, including the state's new at-home rapid testing program, the mask mandate, travel protocol, allow outside permit holders in gyms.
- Continue discussions on the future of the health & safety protocols as it appears that we will not eradicate COVID-19, and we are unlikely to eliminate it.
- Provide an opportunity for community members to ask questions and ideas on these topics to the administration, the health & safety working group, and others.

Vedad Konjic provided an update on air filtration systems.

Member Fantini asked for clarification on gym use and spectators.

- Dr. Turk provided an update from the Health and Safety Workin Group that we are open to allowing spectators at events and pushing for people to be vaccinated. On January 28, spectators may be allowed again.
- Dr. Turk shared the ongoing discussion about the potential permitting of buildings and the importance of prioritizing these spaces for Cambridge/CPS youth.

Dr. Turk provided clarification on international travel: the plan is to stay consistent with CDC guidelines and our focus should be on promoting children ages 5-11 vaccinated and boosters of children 12 and up.

The discussion turned to how to increase vaccination rates.

Dr. Turk shared a tentative plan for the turn of [February break](#).

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

- Member Fantini advocated for additional testing kits and clear instructions on how to report positive cases.

Mayor Siddiqui turned to potential QR codes for rapid tests and then the discussion turned to efforts to help people use rapid tests.

Member Rojas turned the meeting over to the topic of mask mandate.

- Dr. Turk clarified that no decisions had been made yet and the lunch policy will not be reconsidered for at least a month.

Mayor Siddiqui turned to issues regarding testing times at the high school and then discussions turned to potential solutions.

Chair Rojas opened the meeting to the public for discussion:

- Ms. Downing advocated for reconsidering lunch policy

- Dr. Khan shared her experience from working at a pediatric hospital and advocated for no changes to lunch policy should be made during the omicron surge.
- Dr. Jenkins talked about it's important for the School Committee to be explicit on what their goals are.
- Dr. Lichtenstein stated that the goal is to maximize the number of students in school.

The discussion turned over to how increase testing rates/vaccination rates.

- Mr. Monahan advocated for implementing methods used at different schools with high testing rates.
- Member Wilson shared that Principal Smith visited Somerville High School and will be soliciting feedback from educators, scholars and families on implementing methods for better testing rates.

The discussion then turned over to permitting of buildings. The discussion to start having spectators at games was confirmed to be January 28, 2022. It was then confirmed that Mr. Maloney said February 5, 2022 would be approved for the third-party use.

The discussion then turned about masking. It was confirmed that the week of February 28, 2022 will be when the masking policy will be revisited.

- It was confirmed that there has been no date set for the City of Cambridge to lift their indoor mask mandate.

The discussion turned to this pandemic not being in an endemic state yet, the importance of promoting vaccines and the use of K-95 masks. It was debated whether or not masking for all children is necessary.

Chair Rojas adjourned the meeting at 7:53 pm.