

#22-30

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February 15, 2022

MOTION:

WHEREAS: In response to the emergence of COVID-19 in 2020, we focused on zero-transmission strategies in an effort to flatten the curve; and

WHEREAS: In preparation for our return to in-person learning for the 2020-21 year, the Superintendent set up the COVID-19 Safety, Health & Facilities Working Group made up of expert volunteers, the Building & Grounds Subcommittee met regularly to discuss the recommendations of the working group with feedback from the community, and the School Committee adopted the framework of "Schools and the Path to Zero" of Dr. Danielle Allen et al. that stated that schools should be the first to open and the last to close; and

WHEREAS: These efforts resulted in the "COVID-19 Safety & Facilities Procedures Manual", a living document which has continually been reviewed and updated by the Working Group, the Administration and the School Committee; and

WHEREAS: In 2021, with the arrival of vaccines and treatments against COVID-19, we started re-thinking the goal of zero transmission; and

WHEREAS: The Delta and Omicron variants reverted us towards zero transmission strategies; and

WHEREAS: Now, in 2022, with Omicron starting to recede, with everything we have learned about the virus, and the wide availability of vaccines in our community, and the emergence of treatments against COVID-19, and that it appears we will not eradicate the virus, and we are unlikely to eliminate it; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That it is time to modify the goals of the "COVID-19 Safety & Facilities Procedures Manual" from zero transmission to keeping schools open while minimizing severe disease; and be it further

RESOLVED: That this includes balancing the costs and benefits of the COVID-19 protocols on the students and staff; and be it further

RESOLVED: That we have and will continue to make decisions based on the latest science, and that given that COVID-19 will continue to evolve, we need to be ready to reassess the priorities of the "COVID-19 Safety & Facilities Procedures Manual", including returning to a zero-transmission goal/strategy.