

**Groton-Dunstable Regional School District
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
December 8, 2021
Groton-Dunstable Regional Middle School - South Library
344 Main St., Groton, MA**

Members Present: Marlana Gilbert, Rafael Glod, J. Kubick, Brian LeBlanc, Lacey McCabe, Fay Raynor

Members Present on ZOOM: Pete Cronin

Administration Present: Dr. Laura Chesson, Superintendent; Ms. Kristin DeFrancisco, Ass't. Superintendent

Others Present: Kristyn MacInnis, SEPAC Representative

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM

The Chair entertained a vote to enter into Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares in accordance with M.G.L. Ch. 30A, Sec. 21 a-3 (Unit D & A) and to discuss the discipline, and or complaints brought against, a staff member, and to return to regular session.

Adjourn to Executive Session:

Roll Call - R. Glod, yes; J. Kubick, yes; L. McCabe, yes; M. Gilbert, yes; B. LeBlanc, yes; F. Raynor, yes

Return to Regular Session: 7:43 PM

The Chair entertained a motion to approve the meeting minutes from November 10, 2021.

So Moved - R. Glod

Second - B. LeBlanc

Discussion - None

All in Favor

Motion Approved 6-0

Liaison/Subcommittee Updates

SEPAC - Kristyn MacGinnis reported that SEPAC will be hosting 2 webinars in early 2022; February 17, Bullying, what Parents Need to Know, and March 17, Transition Planning. These events will be hosted by the Federation for Children with Special Needs. All information will be posted on the District Website.

B. LeBlanc made a motion to accept 2 payroll warrants totaling \$1,056,409.85 and 5 AP vendor warrants totaling \$1,051,268.21 for a grand total of \$2,107,678.06.

Second - R. Glod

Discussion - None

Roll Call - R. Glod, yes; J. Kubick, yes; L. McCabe, yes; P. Cronin, yes; M. Gilbert, yes; B. LeBlanc, yes; F. Raynor, yes

Motion Approved - 7-0

Return to Liaison/Subcommittee Reports -

M. Gilbert reported that the Dunstable Advisory Board met with Dr. Chesson, Marlena Gilbert, Raffi Glod, and Lacey McCabe in regard to their CARES ACT funds. The Board is still discussing what they will gift back to the district. The monies gifted to the district will be used towards safety protocols, staffing and towards student loss of learning.

R. Glod reported that he has spoken to the district representative's office about regional transportation funding; she will start speaking to the education and transportation chairs. Senator Kennedy's office will be hosting a community forum on "An Act Relative to Anti-Racism, Equality and Justice in Education" cosponsored by the Lowell Democratic City Committee on December 13 from 7-8pm. Mr. Glod also reported that he will be meeting next week with the Dunstable Seniors.

Fay Raynor reported for the Building Committee. Construction will be starting next spring on the new Florence Roche Elementary School and the new track. The community will start to notice changes as staging, fencing, and signage will start to go up.

Questions & Comments from the Public -

Parent comments were related to concerns over the mask mandates, test and stay, and vaccinations. The DESE protocol was discussed.

The Groton Board of Health called the meeting to order in order to participate in the discussion.. Two members were in attendance, Mr. Evan Thackaberry and Mr. Robert Fleischer.

COVID 19 Update - Superintendent

Student vaccination rates reviewed as well as the number of positive cases/vaccination rates for the community and for the schools. Rates were taken from the website of the MDPH at mass.gov on December 2, 2021.

Progress towards the 90% target based actual submitted vaccination certificates:

GDRHS # of students - 708 % vax - 84.8 #vax - 601

GDRHS # of staff - 95 %vax - 99 #vax - 94

Data for the SC to consider before moving forward on a decision to relax the mandate:

- Hopkinton Public Schools did a two week pilot for vaccinated students who had parent permission to remove their mask
- 95 of HS staff and students are currently vaccinated
- 1800 staff and students are pool tested each week
- During the period 11/11 and 11/17 - 9 students and 2 staff tested positive
- During the period 11/18 and 12/2 - 21 students and 1 staff tested positive (this includes the Thanksgiving period) GDRHS saw a much more significant jump in cases than Hopkinton
- SC is now considering whether or not to request mask relaxation from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. In order to consider mask relaxation there would have to be no significant change in the positivity rate for the HS prior to 1/15/22.

Dr. Chesson outlined some suggestions that the pilot mask relaxation occur during school hours (*excluding PE classes*) from 1/15/22 to 1/29/22 *for vaccinated students who have parental permission*; masks would then go back on from 1/29/22 - 2/15/22 to monitor the effect/non-effect on the transmission rate. If this indicates that there is no negative impact of removing masks then the school would go back to relaxing the mask mandate. Ms. McCabe asked for clarification that ONLY VACCINATED STUDENTS would be allowed to remove their masks. Dr. Chesson acknowledged that this statement is correct. Mr. Kubick asked for clarification on athletics to which Dr. Chesson responded that this falls under the MIAA restrictions and buses fall under transportation guidelines. Dr. Chesson reiterated that these were only suggestions she is not making recommendations at this time. She would offer her opinion if asked. The Groton BOH, Mr. Evan Thackaberry also gave some feedback acknowledging that the district has done a great job in helping to limit the Covid spread within the schools, due to the vaccinations and testing. Due to current data, his feeling is that this is not the time to remove masks as we are in the "teeth of the pandemic". He also does not agree with the Hopkinton approach of 2 weeks on and off for mask wearing. Mr. LeBlanc said that it's interesting that the BOH doesn't require masks in businesses around town without knowledge of who is vaccinated yet at the schools we do know who is vaccinated. Mr. Thackaberry stated that children are in closer contact with each other in school and the number of deaths of children is concerning. He feels that keeping young people masked is an easy way to keep the transmission down. The members of the SC each gave their opinion on why they think there should/shouldn't be a change at this time.

The Chair entertained a motion that we maintain our current policy and apply with DESE for the waiver and from that point on reconvene after the approval to discuss further.

So Moved - R. Glod

Second - P. Cronin

Discussion - None

All in Favor - P. Cronin, yes; R. Glod, yes; J. Kubick, yes; L. McCabe, yes; M. Gilbert, yes

Opposed - B. LeBlanc, no; F. Raynor, no

Motion Passed - 5-2

The district will apply for the waiver. The next discussion, depending on DESE's reply, will be brought to the 1/12/22 SC meeting. *The Board of Health adjourned at this time.*

Updates on A+B+C+D=E

What work has been done supporting the district's initiative on acceptance + belonging + community + district level supports = equitable outcomes for all students.

World of Difference - program for HS students to help them recognize bias and the harm it inflicts in the community

Student Support Teams - To assist teachers with incorporating interventions which are connected to the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan. Tier 1

Math and Reading Interventions - For students whose assessment data indicates they need support in order to achieve outcomes consistent with district goals. Tier 2 & 3

Culturally Sustained Literacy with Dr. Parker - Libraries and literacy work to make sure that students are able to show themselves in writing and see themselves in books.

Power of Our Words - What you say and how you say it.

Power of Our Words - Webinars are being offered to parents.

Responsive Classroom - Student centered social and emotional learning approach to teaching and discipline.

Work supporting these efforts:

Literature Work With 8th Grade - Using a specific book, the district is providing students the opportunity to understand historic and systemic injustice.

Open Honors for High School - A class structure in which all students are initially enrolled at the college prep level and then students who wish to take the class for honors credit must apply to do so.

Literacy Workshop at the High School - This is for students who need or want to reinforce their skills in ELA.

Open Student Council at Swallow Union - Student Council at SU has been reframed to ensure that all voices are heard and all interested students may be a part of student government.

Re-imagining Student Government at MS - Reframed to allow more access for all students.

Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) - A systemic, continuous improvement framework in which data based problem solving and decision making is practiced across all levels of the educational system for supporting students.

UDL Professional Development - The district continues to offer graduate level UDL courses to support educators. Designed to support inclusive educational experiences and environments.

Windows, Mirrors, and Sliding Doors - There was a presentation by Ms. DiFrancisco about this concept a couple of months ago. The concept is that children should have all kinds of literature in their lives, some that they recognize as themselves (mirrors), some that would allow them to look out and experience what others are experiencing (windows), and some that are sliding doors.

Fly Five - The district is currently piloting this social emotional program for K-4 in just grades 2-3.

Focused Supervision and Evaluation - The district is working as an evaluation team to develop a common understanding of what supervision and evaluation should look, feel, and sound like.

IEP Calibration - Working with special education staff and Alan Bloom to make sure there is consistency in the use of data to provide the basis for IEP's.

Ms. MacGinnis requested additional information on the rollout of MTSS and Responsive Classroom.

Superintendent's Evaluation

All items are in the committee's packet. L. McCabe will be the person compiling the results.

This item will be brought back to the December 22, 2021 meeting for a vote of approval on the Superintendent's indicator's on her evaluation. Town elections are earlier this year (April 25) so it was recommended that Dr. Chesson submit her artifacts by the end of March in case there is a change in the SC membership.

Policy 1st Read

Update JJF - Student Activities Accounts - recommendations from Business & Finance.

Remove EBC-S - Policy on COVID-Related Issues

J. Kubick made a motion to rescind and remove policy EBCS from the policy handbook.

Second - R. Glod

Discussion - None

Roll Call - P. Cronin, yes; R. Glod, yes; J. Kubick, yes; L. McCabe, yes; M. Gilbert, yes; B.

LeBlanc, yes; F. Raynor, yes

Motion Passed - 7 - 0

Update JLCB - Immunization of Students - note added last year when flu vaccines were required but then removed. This note will be removed.

J. Kubick made a motion to remove the note on the flu vaccine as outlined in the updated policy in the packet for JLCB, Immunization of Students.

Second - R. Glod

Discussion - None

Roll Call - P. Cronin, yes; R. Glod, yes; J. Kubick, yes; L. McCabe, yes; M. Gilbert, yes; B.

LeBlanc, yes; F. Raynor, yes

Motion Passed - 7 - 0

Update JFABD - Homeless Students: Enrollment Rights and Services - MASC updated this policy. The Policy Subcommittee has reviewed and recommended adopting it. This will be brought back for a second read.

Add JFABE - Educational Opportunities for Military Children - Policy Subcommittee would like to add this policy to the handbook. Recommended by the MASC.

Add JFABF - Educational Opportunities for Children in Foster Care - Policy Subcommittee would like to add this policy to the handbook. Recommended by the MASC.

Update JH - Student Absences and Excuses - MASC updated this policy and the Policy Subcommittee is recommending adoption of the new MASC version.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:13 PM.

APP'd 12.22.21

Respectfully Submitted,
Jo Ann Sivazlian
Secretary

List of documents used by the GDRSC during the meeting:

Link to meeting:

<http://schedule.thegrotonchannel.org/Cablecast/public-site/index.html#/search?channel=1&query=school%20committee>

Link to documents

- Agenda
- COVID-19 Update
- Draft Meeting Minutes Nov. 10, 2021
- Policies for 1st Read
- Superintendent's Evaluation Documents
- Warrant(s)