



TOWN OF GROTON

Board of Health
173 Main Street
Groton, MA 01450

BOARD OF HEALTH

Robert J. Fleischer, Chairman
Michelle Collette, Member
Evan Thackaberry, Member

Date: Wednesday, February 16th, 2022
Time: 5:30 PM
Location: Virtual
Members Present: Robert J. Fleischer, Chairman; Michelle Collette, Member; Evan Thackaberry, Member
Other(s) Present: Dr. Laura Chesson, Superintendent of Groton-Dunstable Regional School District

Robert Fleischer called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Brief discussion ensued regarding pooled testing done at the schools and the protocols in place for the testing guidelines and metrics.

Dr. Chesson also discussed with the Board members the current policies in place as well as vaccination rates for each school.

Michelle Collette said that it appears that the number of cases seem to be stabilizing and we are seeing some level of improvement. They will see whether this will be impacted by once students go on winter break assuming if any travel is involved.

Michelle Collette moved to adjourn the meeting and reconvene at 6PM at the Groton-Dunstable School Committee Meeting. Evan Thackaberry seconded and the motion carried.

Minutes by Sammie Kul.

**Groton-Dunstable Regional School District
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING w/ Executive Session
February 16, 2022 - 6:00pm
ZOOM Conference**

Members Present: Marlana Gilbert, Pete Cronin, Rafael Glod, Jeff Kubick, Brian LeBlanc, Lacey McCabe, Fay Raynor

Administration Present: Dr. Laura Chesson, Superintendent; Kristin DeFrancisco, Ass't. Superintendent; Sherry Kersey, Director of Finance & Operations

Others Present: Kristyn MacInnis, SEPAC Representative

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 PM

FY22 Quarterly Update as of December 31st - S. Kersey, Director of Finance & Operations

The update was presented at the last Budget & Finance meeting and the subcommittee voted to accept this financial report. Ms. Kersey reviewed the single accounts that need to have money transferred as they show a deficit, will be increased with grant money, or need additional review.

J. Kubick made a motion to accept the report as presented.

Second - P. Cronin

Discussion - None

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

Motion Approved

FY23 Update/Discussion - S. Kersey, Director of Finance & Operations

Ms. Kersey presented a PowerPoint for the FY23 Budget. The budget book can be found on the district website: gdrsd.org under [Business & Finance Documents](#).

The purpose of this discussion was to present a review of components of the comprehensive budget package; notable assumptions; assessments vs. current placeholders; important dates. Ms. Kersey informed the SC that there are 5 layers of information they will see in the budget book: actuals for FY19, FY20, FY21, the FY22 Budget and the proposal for FY23. In giving the comparison of operating budget for each of the presented 4 scenarios. Mr. Kubick pointed out that scenario 2-4 should read \$42m not \$44m. Ms. Kersey will repost this information and will also complete the 5 year budget projections for FY23-FY27 before certification of the FY23 budget. Notable assumptions: this is a level service budget. There are no additional positions, FTE's remain the same. COVID positions are funded by grants and ARPA funds that will have funding through FY23, the district would have to find funding after that if they decide to keep

those positions. Notable assumptions, contingency funding; in FY22 and FY23 the contingency line of \$400,000 was reduced to \$320,000 in order to balance the budget and reduce assessment requests to the towns. This will remain at \$320,000 for the FY23 budget. Notable assumptions, E&D usage (district savings account, typically used for 1 time expenditures). The Administration is recommending the use of \$600,000 in E&D as compared to \$800,000 in FY21, FY22. Notable assumptions: Capital Plan has been significantly increased, with priority given to items that were health, safety, and technology related, items that were put on hold.

IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

March 1 - Public Hearing FY23 Budget

March 9 - SC Certifies the Budget

March 10 - Send Assessment Letters to Towns

April 30 - Groton Annual Town Meeting

May 14 - Dunstable Annual Town Meeting

Questions and opinions from the SC members were taken at this time.

It was suggested that the SC try to get together with the town's to include them in discussions before the budget is certified by the SC members. Once the SC votes they can decrease the budget but cannot increase the budget. The Chair requested that Dr. Chesson create a document that shows pre-COVID to current day, what the standard ratio is for students per counselor. How much help do we have now compared to pre-COVID and how many students are being serviced for what they need? Jill Greene will attend a meeting in March and will present this information. Kristin DeFrancisco also mentioned that the district is benefiting from Safe and Supportive Schools grants and approval has been received for additional grant money going into the next school year. This money can be used for additional training, consulting, to be able to listen to what students in the community are thinking and need as students are moving through and out of this interrupted learning stage and back into full time school.

Under New Business, Ms. Kersey informed the SC that the district treasurer has resigned effective March 11, 2022. The SC is comfortable with Ms. Kersey review applicants with Justin Williams (Human Resources) and move their recommendation(s) to the SC. This is for separation of duties from the Business Office. This person moves and invests funds, and takes care of reconciliations.

Mr. Kubick made a motion that the SC request that the Director of Business and Finance and the Director of Human Resources do a candidate search and find an appropriate candidate to recommend to the School Committee for approval.

Second - R. Glod

Discussion - None

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

Motion Approved

Approval of School Calendar - Discussion/Vote - Chair

The Chair entertained a motion to approve the FY22-23 as represented in the packet.

So Moved - R. Glod

Second - J. Kubick

Discussion - None

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

Motion Approved

Mask Mandate - Discussion/Vote - Chair

Mr. Kubick provided an update on last evening's Policy Subcommittee. Two model masking policies were voted on and approved. These policies have been submitted to this evening's discussion.

- MASC Guidance based on minimal requirements of DESE's standard.
- Modification of the current policy that takes into account the current environment of a split masking system with the high school being mask optional and the remaining schools being mask required.

Presentation of School District Update as of 2/16/22 - Dr. Chesson

School District Update 2/16/22

Current vaccination levels for staff and students were from early this afternoon. There were slight increases in all schools. The 14 day average of daily incidence continues to drop as does the positivity rate.

Analysis of vaccination rates/school

<u>School</u>	<u>% stud. vaccinated</u>	<u>% stud. no vax, testing</u>	<u>total % stud. vax or testing</u>	<u>Total % Staff & Stud vax or testing</u>
GDRMS	71%	7%	78.10%	80%
Flo Ro	66%	27%	93%	94.5%
SU	54%	37%	91%	92.5%

Dr. Chesson spoke to another district about how they are compiling data to move to mask relaxation. That district is looking at community transmission levels as low, moderate, substantial, and high. If transmission is low or moderate they will be masks off; if there is substantial or high transmission (after 2 consecutive weeks) they will be masks on. They track their data for 7 days.

According to the Chair, the Policy Subcommittee was tasked with coming up with a policy that could unmask the district, by March 7th, in a safe manner. The SC also invited to this meeting, the local Boards of Health and the district's pediatrician; they have also asked for legal advice on the masking matter. The Chair explained that the public would be limited in their contribution to this evening's discussion as they had the opportunity to speak last week.

J. Kubick made a motion that Groton-Dunstable's use of face masks or face coverings as a layered prevention strategy be based on when the following metrics-based scenarios are met. Each scenario uses metrics for community transmission of COVID in the towns of Groton and Dunstable, based on CDC guidelines and definitions. The CDC categories are based on metrics for both total new cases per 100,000 persons and positive test percentage over the previous 7 days. GDRSD will use the state-provided equivalent for each metric, which uses a timeframe of the previous 14 days and is published weekly.

- 1. If community transmission is categorized as "low" or moderate" for two consecutive weeks, use of face masks will be optional at all schools, except where required by state or federal regulations.**
- 2. If community transmission is categorized as "substantial" for two consecutive weeks, use of face masks will be optional only for school levels which have achieved a student fully vaccinated rate of at least 80%, except where required by state or federal regulations. Masks will be required at all other school levels not meeting this vaccination threshold.**
- 3. If community transmission rate is categorized as "high" for two consecutive weeks, use of face masks will be required at all schools.**

The School Committee authorizes the Superintendent to implement the appropriate masking status based on the scenarios outlined above, without requiring an additional vote. Additionally, the Superintendent may implement stricter requirements on an emergency basis to counteract increased rates of in-school transmission. The School Committee will review any emergency actions at its next posted meeting. No changes to masking will be made until March 7th. These guidelines will remain in place until amended or rescinded by the School Committee. (Mr. Kubick gave a [PowerPoint](#) presentation "Summary of Data for Masking Policy")

Second - P. Cronin

Discussion - this motion was emailed to all members so they could review the motion for discussion which included the opinion of the Groton Board of Health. The Dunstable Board of Health was not in attendance.

Discussion ensued which included the committee as well as the Groton Board of Health who offered their general reaction to the motion.

The Groton Board of Health Chair called to order the recessed session started earlier in the day. The BOH entered discussion with their thoughts on the motion and how to move forward with the mandate.

The Chair made a motion to amend Jeff's motion to utilize transmission rates of the district vs. the Towns of Groton and Dunstable.

Second - F. Raynor

Discussion - at the end of this discussion about what the data is based on and additional comments about testing and results not being registered or people with COVID not being tested, **the Chair rescinded her motion to amend.** This returned discussion back to J. Kubick's motion using the metrics he included.

Mr. Kubick made an amendment to exempt Boutwell from the provisions of this so they would continue to mask even under the conditions set forth under this proposal.

Second - R. Glod

Discussion - F. Raynor asked for clarification on Pool Testing vs. Vaccination. Some think one is a substitute for another.

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

Motion on Amendment - Approved

Motion on methodology presented by J. Kubick with community metrics as presented:

M. Gilbert, no; B. LeBlanc, no; L. McCabe, yes; F. Raynor, no; J. Kubick, yes; P. Cronin, yes; R. Glod, yes

Motion Approved

Fay Raynor moved the motion -

B. LeBlanc, yes; P. Cronin, no; L. McCabe, yes; F. Raynor, yes; J. Kubick, yes (5-0)

Motion Moved

B. LeBlanc made a motion to amend our current masking policy which permits optional masks at the high school, to also allow for masks to be optional at any school where the vaccination rate is at least 80%.

Second - M. Gilbert

Discussion - Mr. LeBlanc explained why he made this motion but Mr. Kubich feels it's contradictory to what was just voted on. Ms. Gilbert feels the last vote was a move backwards.

Roll Call - B. LeBlanc, yes; P. Cronin, yes; M. Gilbert, yes; L. McCabe, yes; F. Raynor, no; J. Kubick, no; R. Glod, no

Motion Approved

Clarification for the public, by the Chair - Any school within the district who is at 80% (or higher) vaccination rate can be unmasked.

Mr. Kubick reviewed the need to take a look at policy EBCFA Face Coverings which will need to be reviewed and brought back to the committee for a vote. He suggested that based on the new guidance voted on this evening, the Policy Subcommittee needs to bring this policy back to the SC with revisions.

According to the MIAA, at that time, the home team determines whether there is masking or not. Since the HS is masked optional, indoor events at the GDRHS will be mask optional.

There is a Public Hearing to be held on March 1 also included will be the revised EBCFA and MIAA regulations. There will be no masking changes at BECC at this time.

Public Q&A was open for questions only.

The Groton Board of Health adjourned their meeting at 9:55 PM.

The Chair entertained a motion to adjourn and enter into Executive Session for the purpose 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) and not to return to regular session.

So Moved - P. Cronin

Second - R. Glod

Discussion - None

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

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 10:09 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jo Ann Sivazlian
Secretary

Link to meeting:

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

List of documents used by the GDRSC during the meeting:

- Agenda
- Budget Book FY23
- Calendar 2022 - 2023
- Financial Position - December 2021
- GDRSD Proposed Budget PP
- School District Update