

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 4, 2021
9:00 A.M.
CARLISLE SCHOOL CAFETERIA
AND ZOOM REMOTE ACCESS**

Present– School Committee: Jack Huntress, Eva Mostoufi, Carrie Patel
Present – School Committee via Zoom: Amanda Comperchio, Sara Wilson
Present– School Administration: James O’Shea, Superintendent; Lori Bruce, Director of Student Support Services; Matt Mehler, Middle School Principal; Mary O’Regan, Assistant to the Superintendent
Present – School Administration via Zoom: Dennet Sidell, Elementary Principal

In order to adhere to social distancing guidelines, members of the public will be allowed access to this meeting in the cafeteria at the Carlisle School. Per Governor Baker’s order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A sec. 20, members of the public who cannot access this meeting in the cafeteria can access it via live stream at:

Topic: Special School Committee Meeting 8-4-21

Time: Aug 4, 2021 09:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://carlisle-k12-ma-us.zoom.us/j/86948416062?pwd=bWRFamxJNEtiUmQvODhhYnVRRUdvdz09>

Meeting ID: 869 4841 6062

Passcode: 060593

I. Call to Order

Mr. Huntress called the meeting to order at 9:01 A.M. and announced that the meeting was being recorded.

II. Information/Discussion Items

- A. 2021-2022 School Reopening: Mr. Huntress discussed the purpose and format of the meeting. He noted that no decisions would be made by the committee today. Mr. O’Shea provided a re-cap of what COVID protocols were in place during the 2020-2021 school year and what requirements were removed in late spring 2021. The week prior to the meeting Mr. O’Shea sent out a communication to families informing them that there would be no mandatory mask requirements or social distancing although other safety protocols and measures would remain in place for the upcoming school year. Two days following that communication, new guidance was released by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Department of Public Health (DPH) strongly recommending that all PreK-Grade 6 students wear masks while in school as well as those students in Grades 7 and 8 who are unvaccinated. With the start of school a few weeks away, the committee has time to watch what happens in other states and districts with schools reopening and if cases of COVID continue to spike. Mr. O’Shea reported DESE is not mandating all towns and districts to follow the same guidance but they are making strong recommendations around masking guidance. He also noted that DESE encourages districts to create “On Ramps” and “Off Ramps” to allow for enacting restrictions and rolling back restrictions as COVID cases rise and fall.

Further discussion included questions such as “What problems are we trying to solve,” “Are there metrics we can use to measure progress,” and “Why are we waiting to act?” There was a brief review of the recommendations released on July 30, 2021 by DESE and DPH. Districts have been put in a position where they are forced to make difficult decisions because nothing was mandated. Presently screening and pool testing were not going to continue in the fall, but that may need to be revisited should COVID cases continue to rise. There have been no discussions regarding mandating vaccinations for staff although other districts may be moving in that direction. All faculty and staff in Carlisle who wanted to be vaccinated are vaccinated at this time. Comparable data regarding COVID transmission in schools is not readily available. Concerns were raised that COVID is a respiratory disease and that handwashing and other protocols may not help reduce transmission as well as mask wearing would.

It was noted that the committee waited to make decisions regarding school reopening in the fall of 2020 and thoughtful, informed decisions were made. Carlisle is in a unique position as it is a PreK-8 district. Should only unvaccinated students and staff be asked to wear masks, that may create issues. It was pointed out that someone would need to police who should wear a mask. Decisions that will be made regarding protocols will be fluid and do not need to be in place for the entire school year.

The following make public comments regarding back to school plans and masking: Setty Madhava, Kate Henderson, Deepa Chungi, Angel Valchinov, Janelle Kapusta, and Victoria Elman.

III. Adjourn Meeting

A motion was made by Ms. Comperchio to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Patel. The motion passed with a roll call vote: Comperchio, aye; Huntress, aye; Mostoufi, aye; Patel, aye. The meeting was adjourned at 10:02 AM.